



BX 9184 .A5 W3 1806 v.2  
Watson, Thomas, d. 1686.  
A body of practical divinity











A  
BODY  
OF  
PRACTICAL DIVINITY,  
CONSISTING OF ABOVE  
ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY SIX-SERMONS  
ON THE  
SHORTER CATECHISM,

COMPOSED BY  
THE REVEREND ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES  
AT WESTMINSTER,  
WITH  
A SUPPLEMENT OF SOME SERMONS  
ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE;  
TOGETHER WITH  
THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT.  
TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
CHRIST'S VARIOUS FULNESS.

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*Recommended to Masters of Families, and Others, by Several Ministers.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH, HEB. xii. 4.

Berwick :

PRINTED BY AND FOR W. GRACIE;  
ALSO, FOR J. RENNISON, BOOKSELLER, BERWICK.

1806.



# DISCOURSES, &c.

## OF BAPTISM.

MATTH. xxviii. 19.

*Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them.—*

**W**E are still upon that question in the catechism,  
“ *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?* ”

“ *Ans.* They are his ordinances, especially the word sacraments, and prayer.”

I have spoken to the first, ‘ The word read and preached : ’  
I now proceed to the second.

II. *The way whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is, in the use of the sacraments.*

Qu. 1. *What are sacraments in general?*

*Ans.* They are visible signs of invisible grace.

Qu. 2. *Is not the word of God sufficient to salvation? What need then is there of sacraments?*

*Ans.* We must not be wise above what is written : this may satisfy, it is God’s will, that his church should have sacraments; and it is God’s goodness, thus by sacraments to condescend to our weak capacities, John iv. 48. ‘ Except ye see signs, ye will not believe.’ God to strengthen our faith, confirms the covenant of grace, not only by promises, but by sacramental signs.

Qu. 3. *What are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

*Ans.* Two : baptism, and the Lord’s supper.

Qu. 4. *But are there no more? the papists tell of five more, viz. confirmation, penance, matrimony, orders, and the extreme unction.*

*Ans.* 1. There were but two sacraments under the law, therefore there are no more now, 1 Cor. x. 2, 3, 4.

2. These two sacraments are sufficient : the one signifying our entrance into Christ, and the other our growth and perseverance in him.

(1.) I begin with the first sacrament, Baptism. ‘ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them—‘Go teach all nations:’ the Greek word is “Make disciples of all nations.” If it be asked, how should we make them disciples? It follows, Baptizing them and teaching them. In a heathen nation, First teach them, and then baptize them; but in a Christian Church, First baptize them, and then teach them.

Qu. 5. *What is baptism?*

Ans. In general, it is a matriculation, or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ’s flock: more particularly, ‘Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing, or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.’

Qu. 6. *What is the meaning of the parent in presenting his child to be baptized?*

Ans. The parent, in presenting his child to be baptized, doth, (1.) Make a public acknowledgment of original sin; that the soul of his child is polluted, therefore needs washing away of sin by Christ’s blood and spirit; both which washings are signified by the sprinkling of water in baptism. (2.) The parent by bringing his child to be baptized, doth solemnly devote his child to the Lord, and enrol him in God’s family; and truly this may be a great satisfaction to a religious parent, that he hath given up his child to the Lord in baptism. How can a parent look with comfort on that child, who was never yet dedicated to God?

Qu. 7. *What then is the benefit of baptism?*

Ans. The party baptized hath, (1.) An entrance into the visible body of the church. (2.) The party baptized hath a right sealed to the ordinances, which is a privilege full of glory, Rom. ix. 4. (3.) The child baptized is under a more special providential care of Christ, who appoints the tutelage of angels to be the infant’s life-guard.

Qu. 8. *Is this all the benefit?*

Ans. No: to such as belong to the election, baptism is a ‘seal of the righteousness of faith,’ Rom. iv. 11. a laver of regeneration, and a badge of adoption.

Qu. 9. *How doth it appear that children have a right of baptism?*

Ans. Children are parties of the covenant of grace. The covenant was made with them, Gen. xvii. 7. ‘I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.’ And Acts ii. 39. ‘The promise is to you and to your children.’ The covenant of grace may be considered



either, (1.) More strictly, as an absolute promise to give saving grace ; and so none but the elect are in covenant with God. Or, (2.) More largely as a covenant containing in it many outward glorious privileges, in which respects the children of believers do belong to the covenant of grace : the promise is to you and to your seed. The infant seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the covenant of grace as their parents ; and having a right to the covenant, they cannot justly be denied baptism, which is the seal. I would ask this question of them who deny infant baptism, It is certain the children of believers were once visibly in covenant with God, and did receive the seal of their admission into the church ; now, where do we find this covenant-interest, or church-membership of infants was ever repealed or made void ? Certainly Jesus Christ did not come to put believers and their children into a worse condition than they were in before. If the children of believers should not be baptized, and they are in a worse condition now, than they were in before Christ's coming. Before I come to prove the baptizing of infants I shall answer the objections made against it.

*Obj. 1. The scripture is silent herein, and doth not mention infant-baptism.*

*Ans.* Though there is not the word infant baptism in scripture, yet there is the thing ; there is not mention made in scripture of women's receiving the sacrament ; but who doubts but the command, ' Take eat, this is my body,' concerns them ? doth not their faith need strengthening as well as others ? So the word Trinity is not to be found in scripture, but there is that which is equivalent, 1 John v. 7. ' There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these Three are One.' So, tho' the word infant-baptism is not mentioned in scripture, yet the practice of baptizing infants, may be drawn out of scripture by undeniable consequence.

*Qn. How is that proved ?*

*Ans.* The scripture mentions whole families baptized : as the household of Lydia, Crispus, and the jailor, Acts xvi. 31. ' He was baptized, he and all his house.' Wherein we must rationally imagine that there were some little children. If it be said, there is no mention there made of children : I answer, neither are servants named : yet it cannot be supposed but that, in so great a family there were some servants.

*Obj. 2. But infants are not capable of the end of baptism ; for baptism signifies the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Now infants cannot understand this ; therefore what benefit can baptism be to them ?*

*Ans.* Whereas it is said infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism, neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand circumcision ; yet the ordinance of circumcision was

not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet it may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ took in his arms, understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing; Mark x. 16. 'He put his hands upon them and blessed them.'

*Qu. But what benefit can the child have of baptism if it understand not the nature of baptism?*

*Ans.* It may have a right to the promise sealed up, which it shall have an actual interest in when it comes to have faith. A legacy may be of use to the child in the cradle; though it now understand not the legacy, yet when it is grown up to years, it is fully possessed of it. But it may be further objected;

*Obj. 1. The party to be baptized is to be engaged to God; but how can the child engage?*

*Ans.* The parents can engage for it, which God is pleased to accept as equivalent to the child's personal engaging.

*Obj. 2. If Baptism comes in the room of circumcision, only the males were circumcised, Gen. xvii. 30. Then, what warrant is there for baptizing females?*

*Ans.* The females were included, and were virtually circumcised in the males. What is done to the head is done to the body; the man therefore being the head of the woman, 1 Cor. xi. 3. What was done to the male sex was interpretatively done to the female. Having answer'd these objections, I come now to prove by argument infant-baptism.

*1st, Argument.* If children during their infancy are capable of grace, then they are capable of baptism: but children in their infancy are capable of grace, therefore they are capable of baptism. I prove the minor, that they are capable of grace, thus; if children in their infancy may be saved, then they are capable of grace; but children in their infancy may be saved; which is proved thus: if the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, then they may be saved, but the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, as it is clear from Mark x. 14. 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?

*2d, Arg.* If infants may be among the number of God's servants, then there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family; but infants may be in the number of God's servants, that is evident, because God calls them his servants, Lev. xxv. 4. 'He shall depart from thee, and his children with him, for they are my servants.' Therefore children in their infancy being God's servants, why should they not have baptism, which is the *testera*, the mark or seal which God sets upon his servants?

*3d, Arg.* Is from 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'But now are your children holy.' Children are not called holy, as if they were free from

original sin ; but in the judgment of Charity they are to be esteemed holy and true members of the church of God, because their parents are believers. Hence that excellent divine Mr. Helderſam ſaith, “ that the children of the faithful, as ſoon as they are born, have a covenant-holineſs, and ſo a right and title to baptiſm, which is the token of the covenant.”

*4th, Arg.* From the opinion of the fathers and the practice of the church. (1.) The ancient fathers were ſtrong aſſerters of infant-baptiſm, Irenæus, Baſil, Lactantius, Cyprian and Auſtin. (2.) It was the practice of the Greek church to baptize her infants. Eraſmus ſaith, that infant baptiſm hath been uſed in the church of God, for above fourteen hundred years. And St. Auſtin, in his book againſt Pelagius, aſſirms, that it hath been the cuſtom of the church in all ages to baptize infants. Yea, it was an apoſtolic practice ; St. Paul aſſirms, that he baptized the whole houſe of Stephanus, 1 Cor. i. 16.

And as you have ſeen ſcripture-arguments for infant-baptiſm, ſo let us conſider whether the practice of thoſe who delay the baptizing of children till riper years, be warrantable.—For my part, I cannot gather it from ſcripture : For though we read of perſons adult and grown up to years of diſcretion, in the apoſtles’ times, baptized, yet thoſe were ſuch as were converted from heatheniſh idolatry to the true orthodox faith : but that in a Chriſtian church the children of believers ſhould be kept unbaptized ſeveral years, I know neither precept nor example for it in ſcripture, but it is wholly apocryphal. The baptizing of perſons grown up to maturity, we may argue againſt *ab effectu*, from the ill conſequence of it : they dip the perſons they baptize over head and ears in cold water, and naked ; which as it is indecent, ſo it is dangerous, and hath been often-times the occaſion of chronical diſeaſes, yea, death itſelf ; and ſo it is a plain breach of the ſixth commandment. And how far God hath given up many perſons, who are for the deferring of baptiſm, to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident, if we conſult with hiſtory : eſpecially if we read over the acting of the anabaptiſts in Germany.

*Uſe. 1.* See the riches of God’s goodneſs, who will not only be the God of believers, but takes their ſeed into covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. ‘ I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, to be a God unto thee and thy ſeed.’ A father counts it a great privilege, not only to have his own name, but his child’s name put in a will.

*Uſe 2.* It blames thoſe parents who forbid little children to be brought to Chriſt : they withhold the ordinance. By denying their infants baptiſm, they exclude them from having a membership in the viſible church, and ſo their infants are ſuckling pagans. Such as deny their children baptiſm, make God’s

institutions under the law more full of kindness and grace to children, than they are now under the gospel; which, how strange a paradox it is, I leave you to judge.

*Use 3. Of exhortation. Branch 1.* We that are baptized, let us labour to find the blessed fruits of baptism in our own souls: let us labour not only to have the sign of the covenant, but the grace of the covenant. Many glory in this, that they are baptized. The Jews gloried in their circumcision, because of their royal privileges: to them belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, Rom. ix. 4. But many of them were a shame and reproach to their circumcision, Rom. ii. 24. 'For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles tho' God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' The scandalous Jews (tho' circumcised) were, in God's account, as heathens, Amos ix. 7. 'Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me? saith the Lord.' Alas! what is it to have the name of Christ, and want his image? what is baptism of water, without the baptism of the Spirit? many baptized Christians are no better than heathens. O labour to find the fruits of baptism, that Christ is formed in us, Gal. iv. 19. that our nature is changed, we are made holy and heavenly: this is to be baptized into Jesus, Rom. vi. 3. Such as live unsuitable to their baptism, may go with baptismal water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell.

*Branch 2.* Let us labour to make a right use of our baptism.

*First use of baptism.* Let us use it as a shield against temptations. Satan, I have given up myself to God by a sacred vow in baptism; I am not my own, I am Christ's: therefore I cannot yield to thy temptations, but I break my oath of allegiance which I made to God in baptism. Luther tells us of a pious woman, who when the devil tempted her to sin, she answered, Satan, *Baptizata sum*, "I am baptized:" and so beat back the tempter.

*Second use of baptism.* Let us use it as a spur to holiness. By remembering our baptism, let us be stirred up to make good our baptismal engagements: renouncing the world, flesh, and devil, let us devote ourselves to God and his service. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, implies a solemn dedication of ourselves to the service of all the three Persons in the Trinity. It is not enough that our parents dedicate us to God in baptism, but we must dedicate ourselves to him: this is called a 'living to the Lord,' Rom. xiv. 8. Our life should be spent in worshipping God, in loving God, in exalting God: we should walk as becomes the gospel, Phil. i. 27. Shine as stars in the world, and live as earthly angels.

*Third use of baptism.* Let us use it as an argument to courage. We should be ready to confess that holy Trinity, into

whose name we were baptised. With the conversion of the heart, must go the confession of the tongue, Luke xii. 8. 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God;' Peter openly confessed Christ crucified, Acts iv. 10. Cyprian, a man of a brave spirit was like a rock, whom no waves could shake; like an adamant, whom no sword could cut: he confessed Christ before the proconsul, and suffered himself to be proscribed; yea, chose death, rather than he would betray the truths of Christ. He that dares not confess the holy Trinity, shames his baptism, and God will be ashamed to own him at the day of judgment.

*Ult. use.* See the fearfulness of the sin of apostacy! 'Tis a renouncing of our baptism, 'Tis damnable perjury to go away from God after a solemn vow, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken me.' He turned renegado, and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. Julian the apostate (Gregory Nazianzen observes) bathed himself in the blood of beasts offered in sacrifice to heathen-gods; and so, as much as in him lay, washed off his former baptism. The case of such as fall away after baptism, is dreadful, Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back.' The Greek word, to draw back, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours; so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him;' that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.

II. The second sacrament wherein Jesus Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is the Lord's supper.

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## OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MARK xiv. 22. *And as they did eat, Jesus took Bread, &c.*

II. HAVING spoken to the sacrament of baptism, I come now to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is the most spiritual and sweet ordinance that ever was instituted: here we have to do more immediately with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with him. In prayer we look up to Christ; in the sacrament, by faith, we touch him. In the word preached, we hear Christ's voice: in the sacrament we feed on him.

Qu. 1. *What names and titles in scripture are given to the sacrament?*

*Ans.* 1. It is called, (1.) *Mensa Domini*, 'The Lord's table,' 1 Cor. x. 21. The papists call it an altar, not a table. The reason is, because they turn the sacrament into a sacrifice, and pretend to offer up Christ corporally in the mass. It being the Lord's table, shews with what reverence and solemn devotion we should approach to these holy mysteries: the Lord takes notice of the frame of our hearts when we come to his table, Matth. xxii. 11. 'the king came in to see the guests.' We dress ourselves when we come to the table of some great monarch; we should think with ourselves, we are going to the table of the Lord, therefore should dress ourselves by holy meditation and heart-consideration. Many think it is enough to come to the sacraments, but mind not whether they come in 'due order,' 1 Chron. xv. 13. Perhaps they had scarce a serious thought before, whether they were going: all their dressing was by the glass, not by the Bible. Chrysostom calls it, "The dreadful table of the Lord:" so it is to such as come unworthily. (2.) The sacrament is called, *Cena Domini*, the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. to import it is a spiritual feast. It is indeed a royal feast; God is in this cheer: Christ, in both natures, God and man, is the matter of this supper. (3.) The sacrament is called a 'communion,' 1 Cor. x. 16. 'The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' The sacrament being called a communion, shews,

1<sup>st</sup>, That this ordinance is only for believers, because none else can have communion with Christ in these holy mysteries. — *Communio fundatur in unione*: faith only gives us union with Christ, and by virtue of this we have communion with him in his body and blood. None but the spouse communicates with her husband; a stranger may drink of his cup, but she only hath his heart, and communicates with him in a conjugal manner; so strangers may have the sign, drink of the cup, but only believers drink of Christ's blood, and have communion with him in his privileges.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The sacrament being a communion, shews, that it is *symbolum amoris*, a bond of that unity and charity which should be among Christians, 1 Cor. x. 17. 'We being many are one body.' As many grains make one bread, so many Christians are one body. A sacrament is a love-feast. The primitive Christians (as Justin Martyr notes) had their holy salutations at the blessed supper, in token of that dearness of affection which they did bear to each other. It is a communion, therefore there must be love and union. The Israelites did eat the passover with bitter herbs; so must we eat the sacrament with bitter herbs of repentance, but not with bitter hearts of wrath and malice. The hearts of the communicants should be knit together with the bond of love. "Thou braggest of thy faith (faith

Austin) but shew me thy faith by thy love to the saints." For, as in the sun, light and heat are inseparable; so faith and love are twisted together inseparably. Where there are divisions, the Lord's supper is not properly a communion, but a disunion.

Qu. 2. *What is the Lord's supper?*

Ans. It is a visible sermon, wherein Christ crucified is set before us; or, it is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by receiving the holy elements of bread and wine, our communion with Christ is signified and sealed up to us. Or thus, it is a sacrament divinely instituted; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, Christ's death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, by faith made partakers of his body and blood, and all the benefits flowing from thence.

For the further explaining of the nature of the Lord's supper, I shall look back to the institution.

1. 'Jesus] took bread.' Here is the master of the feast, or the Instituter of the sacrament. 'The Lord Jesus he took bread. He only is fit to institute a sacrament, who is able to give virtue and blessing to it.

2. 'He took bread.'] Christ's taking of the bread was one part of his consecration of the elements, and setting them apart for an holy use. And as Christ did consecrate the elements, so we must labour to have our hearts consecrated before we receive these holy mysteries in the Lord's supper. How unseemly a sight is it to see any come to these holy elements, having hearts leavened with pride, covetousness, envy! These do, with Judas, receive the devil in the sop, and are no better than crucifiers of the Lord of glory.

3. 'And blessed it.'] This is another part of the consecration of the element, Christ blessed it; he blesteth, and it shall be blessed, viz. he looked up to heaven for a benediction upon this ordinance newly founded.

4. 'And brake it.'] The bread broken, and the wine poured out, was to signify to us the agony and ignominy of Christ's sufferings, the rending of Christ's body on the cross, and that effusion of blood which was distilled from his blessed sides.

5. 'And gave it] to them.' Christ's giving the bread, denotes Christ's giving of himself and all his benefits to us freely. Tho' Christ was sold, yet given: Judas did sell Christ, but Christ gave himself to us.

6. 'He gave it to them.'] viz. The disciples. This is the children's bread; Christ doth not cast these pearls before swine. Whether Judas was present at the supper, is controverted: I rather incline to think he was not; for Christ said to the disciples, 'This is my blood, which is shed for you,' Luke xxii. 20. Christ knew his blood was never shed effectually and intentionally for Judas. In eating the passover, Christ gave Ju-

das a sop, which was a bit of unleavened bread dipt in a sauce made with bitter herbs ; Judas having received the sop, went immediately out, John xiii. But, suppose Judas were there, though he received the elements, yet not the blessing.

7. 'Take, eat.'] This expression of eating denotes four things : (1.) The near mystical union between Christ and his saints. As the meat which is eaten incorporates with the body, and becomes one with it : so, by eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood spiritually, we partake of his merits and graces, and are mystically 'One with him,' John xvii. 23. 'I in them.' (2.) 'Take, eat.' Eating shews the infinite delight the believing soul hath in Christ. Eating is greatful and pleasing to the palate : so feeding on Christ by a lively faith is delicious. *Nulas anime suavior cibus*, Lanctantius. No such sweet feeding as on Christ crucified. This is a 'feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined.' (3.) 'Take, eat.' Eating denotes nourishment. Meat, as it is delicious to the palate, so it is nourishing to the body : so eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, is nutritive to the soul. The new creature is nourished at the table of the Lord, to everlasting life, John vi. 54. 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.' (4.) 'Take, eat,' shews the wisdom of God, who restores us by the same means by which we fell. We fell by taking and eating the forbidden fruit, and we are recovered again by taking and eating of Christ's flesh : we died by eating the tree of knowledge, and we live by eating the tree of life.

8. 'This is my body.'] These words, *Hoc est corpus meum*, have been much controverted between us and the papists. 'This is my body : ' that is, by a metonymy : it is a sign and figure of my body. The papists hold transubstantiation, that the bread is, after consecration, turned into the very substance of Christ's body. We say, we receive Christ's body spiritually : they say, they receive Christ's body carnally ; which is contrary to scripture. The scripture affirms, that the 'heavens must receive Christ's body, until the times of the resititution of all things,' Acts iii. 21. Christ's body cannot be at the same time in heaven and in the host. Aquinas saith, "It is not possible by any miracle, that a body should be locally in two places at once." Besides, it is absurd to imagine, that the bread in the sacrament should be turned into Christ's flesh, and that his body, which was hung before, should be made again of bread. So that, 'This is my body,' is, as if Christ had said, This is a sign and representation of my body.

9. 'And he took the cup.'] The cup is put by metonymy of the subject for the adjunct, for the wine in the cup ; it signifies the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The taking of the cup denotes the redundancy of merit in Christ, and the fulness of our redemption by him. He not only took the bread, but the cup.



10. 'And when he had given thanks.'] Christ gave thanks that God had given these elements of bread and wine to be signs and seals of man's redemption by Christ. Christ's giving of thanks, shews his philanthropy, or love to mankind, who did so rejoice and bless God, that lost man was now in a way of recovery, and that he should be raised higher in Christ than ever he was in innocency.

11. 'He gave the cup to them.'] Why then dare any withhold the cup? this is to pollute and curtail the ordinance, and alter it from its primitive institution. Christ and his apostles administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And the cup was received in the ancient church for the space of 1400 years, as is confessed by two popish councils. Christ saith expressly, 'Drink ye all of this.' He doth not say, eat ye all of this; but, 'Drink ye all;' as foreseeing the sacrilegious impiety of the church of Rome in keeping back the cup from the people. The popish counsel of Constance speaks plainly but impudently, "That although Christ instituted and administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the wine; yet the authority of the holy canons, and the custom of the mother-church, think good to deny the cup to the laity." Thus, as the popish priests make Christ but half a Saviour, so they administer to the people but half a sacrament. The sacrament is Christ's last-will and testament: in the text 'This is my blood of the new testament.' Now to alter or take away any thing from a man's will and testament, is a great impiety: What is it to alter and mangle Christ's last will and testament? Sure it is an high affront to Christ.

Qu. 3. *What are the ends of the Lord's supper?*

Ans. It is an ordinance appointed to confirm our faith, John iv. 48. 'Except ye see signs ye will not believe.' Christ sets the elements before us, that by these signs our faith may be strengthened. As faith cometh by hearing, so it is confirmed by seeing Christ crucified. The sacrament is not only a sign to represent Christ, but a seal to confirm our interest in him.

Qu. *But it is the Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament.*

Ans. 1. This is not good logic. The Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament, is, as if one should say, God feeds our bodies, therefore bread doth not feed us; whereas God feeds us by bread; so the Spirit confirms our faith by the use of the sacrament.

2. The end of the sacrament is, to keep up the, 'memory of Christ's death.' 1 Cor. xi. 25. 'This do ye in remembrance of me.' If a friend give us a ring at his death, we wear it to keep up the memory of our friend; much more then ought we

to keep up the memorial of Christ's death in the sacrament : Christ's death lays a foundation for all the magnificent blessings which we receive from Christ. The covenant of grace was agreed on in heaven, but sealed upon the cross. Christ hath sealed all the articles of peace in his blood. Remission of sin flows from Christ's death, Matth. xxvi. 28. ' This is my blood of the new testament shed for many, for the remission of sins.' Consecration or making us holy, in the fruit of Christ's death, Heb. ix. 14. ' How much more shall the blood of Christ, purge your conscience !' Christ's intercession is made available to us by virtue of his death ; Christ could not have been admitted an advocate, if he had not been first a sacrifice. Our entering into heaven is the fruit of Christ's blood, Heb. x. 19. Christ could not have prepared mansions for us, if he had not first purchased them by his death : so that we have a great deal of cause to commemorate Christ's death in the sacrament.

*Qu. In what manner are we to remember the Lord's death in the sacrament ?*

*Ans.* It is not only an historical remembrance of Christ's death and passion ; thus Judas remembers Christ's death, and how he betrayed him ; and Pilate remembers Christ's death, and how he crucified him : but our remembering Christ's death in the sacrament must be,

(1.) A mournful remembrance. We must not be able to look on Christ crucified with dry eyes, Zech. xii. 10. ' They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn over him.' O Christian, when thou lookest on Christ in the sacrament, remember how oft thou hast crucified him ! The Jews did it but once, thou often. Every oath is a nail with which thou piercest his hands : every unjust, sinful action is a spear with which thou woundest his heart. O remember Christ with sorrow, to think thou shouldest make his wounds bleed afresh !

MARK xiv. 22, 23, 24. *Jesus took Bread.*

(2.) It must be a ' joyful remembrance,' John viii. 56. ' Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced.' When a Christian sees a sacrament-day approach, he should rejoice. This ordinance of the supper is an earnest of heaven ; 'tis the glass, in which we see him whom our souls love ; it is the chariot by which we are carried up to Christ : ' When Jacob saw the waggons and the chariots which were to carry him to his son Joseph, his spirit revived,' Gen. xlv. 27. God hath appointed the sacrament, on purpose to cheer and revive a sad heart. When we

look on our sins, we have cause to mourn ; but when we see Christ's blood shed for our sins, this may make us rejoice. In the sacrament our wants are supplied, our strength is renewed : here we meet with Christ, and doth not this call for joy ? A woman that hath been long debarred from the society of her husband, how glad is she of his presence ! At the sacrament the believing spouse meets with Christ : he saith to her, All I have is thine ; my love is thine to pity thee ; my mercy is thine, to save thee. How can we think in the sacrament on Christ's blood shed, and not rejoice ; *Sanguis Christi clavis paradisi* ; Christ's blood is the key which opens heaven, else we had been all shut out.

3. End of the sacrament is, to work in us an endeared love to Christ. When Christ bleeds over us, well may we say, Behold how he loved us ! Who can see Christ die, and not be ' sick of love ? ' This is an heart of stone, whom Christ's love will not melt.

4. End of the sacrament, the mortifying of corruption. To see Christ crucified for us, is a means to crucify sin in us. Christ's death (like the water of jealousy) makes the ' thigh of sin to rot,' Numb. v. 27. How can a wife endure to see that spear which killed her husband ? how can we endure those sins which made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood ? When the people of Rome saw Cæsar's bloody robe, they were incensed against them that slew him. Sin hath rent the white robe of Christ's flesh, and dy'd it of a crimson colour : the thoughts of this will make us seek to be avenged on our sins.

5. End, the augmentation and increase of all the graces, hope, zeal, patience. The word preached begets grace, the Lord's supper nourisheth it : the body by feeding increaseth strength ; so doth the soul by feeding on Christ sacramentally. *Cum defecerit virtus mea calicem sultarem accipiam*, Bern. " When my spiritual strength begins to fail, I know a remedy (saith Bernard) I will go to the table of the Lord ; there will I drink and recover my decayed strength." There is difference between dead stones and living plants. The wicked, who are stones, receive no spiritual increase ; but the godly, who are plants of righteousness, being watered with Christ's blood, grow more fruitful in grace.

Qu. 4. *Why are we to receive this holy supper ?*

Ans. Because it is a duty incumbent. ' Take, Eat.' And observe, it is a command of love. If Christ had commanded us some great matter would not we have done it ? 2 Kings v. 13. ' If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing wouldst thou not have done it ? ' If Christ had enjoined us to have given him thousands of rams, or to have parted with the fruit of our bodies, would we not have done it ? Much more when he only saith,

'Take,' and 'Eat:' Let my broken body feed you, let my blood poured out, save you. 'Take and Eat.' This is a command of love, and shall we not readily obey?

2. We are to celebrate the Lord's supper, because it is a provoking of Christ, to stay away. Prov. ix. 2. 'Wisdom hath furnished her table.' So Christ hath furnished his table, set bread and wine (representing his body and blood) before his guests, and when they wilfully turn their backs upon the ordinance, Christ looks upon it as a slighting of his love, and that makes the fury rise up in his face, Luke xiv. 24. 'For I say unto you, that none of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper.' I will shut them out of my kingdom, I will provide them a black banquet, where weeping shall be the first course, and gnashing of teeth the second.

Qu. 5. *Whether the Lord's supper be oft to be administered?*

Ans. Yes: 1 Cor. xi. 26. 'As oft as ye eat of this bread.' The ordinance is not to be celebrated once in a year, or once in our lives, but often. A Christian's own necessities may make him come often hither. His corruptions are strong, therefore he had need come often hither for an antidote to expel the poison of sin; and his graces are weak. Grace is like a lamp, Rev. iii. 2. if it be not often fed with oil, it is apt to go out. How therefore do they sin against God, who come but very seldom to this ordinance! Can they thrive, who for a long time forbear their food: and others there are who do wholly forbear: this is a great contempt offered to Christ's ordinance. Men do as it were tacitly said, let Christ keep his feast to himself. What a cross-grained piece is man! he will eat when he should not, and he will not eat when he should. When God said, 'Eat not of this forbidden fruit;' then he will be sure to eat: when God saith, 'Eat of this bread, and drink of this cup;' then he refuseth to eat.

Qu. 6. *Are all to come promiscuously to this holy ordinance?*

Ans. No; that were to make the Lord's table an ordinary. Christ forbids to 'cast pearls before swine,' Mat. vii. 6. The sacramental bread is children's bread, and it is not to be cast to the profane. As, at the giving of the law, God set bounds about the mount that none might touch it, Exod. xix. 12. So God's table should be guarded, that the profane should not come near. In the primitive times, after sermon done, and they were going to celebrate the Lord's supper, an officer stood up and cried, "Holy things for holy men:" and then several of the congregation were to depart. "I would have my hand cut off (saith Chrysostom) rather than I would give Christ's body and blood to the profane." The wicked do not eat Christ's flesh, but tear it; they do not drink his blood, but spill it. These holy mysteries in the sacraments are *tremenda mysteria*, mysteries

that the soul is to tremble at. Sinners defile the holy things of God, they poison the sacramental cup: We read that the wicked are to be set at Christ's feet, Pf. cx. not at his table.

Qu. 7. *How may we receive the supper of the Lord worthily, that so it may become effectual to us?*

Ans. That we may receive it worthily, and it may become efficacious.

(1.) We must solemnly prepare ourselves before we come: we must not rush upon the ordinance rudely and irreverently, but come in due order. There was a great deal of preparation to the passover, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. and the sacrament comes in the room of it.

Qu. *Wherein doth this solemn preparing for the ordinance consist?*

Ans. (1.) In examining ourselves. (2.) In dressing our souls before we come, which is by washing in the water of repentance. (3.) By exciting the habit of grace into exercise. (4.) In begging a blessing upon the ordinance.

(1.) Solemn preparing for the sacrament consists in self-examining, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.' It is not only a counsel, but a charge: 'Let him examine himself.' As if a king should say, "Let it be enacted." Jesus Christ having by his institution consecrated these elements in the supper to an high mystery, they represent his 'body and blood:' therefore there must be preparation; and if preparation, then there must be first examining ourselves, without which there can be no preparation. Let us be serious in this examining ourselves, our salvation depends upon it. We are curious in examining other things; we will not take gold, till we examine it by the touch-stone; we will not take land, but we will examine the title: and shall not we be as exact and curious in examining the state of our souls?

Qu. 1. *What is required to this self-examining?*

Ans. There must be a solemn retiring of the soul. We must set ourselves apart, and retire for some time from all secular employment, that we may be more serious in this work. There is no casting up of accounts in a crowd; nor can we examine ourselves when we are in a crowd of worldly business. We read, a man that was in a 'journey might not come to the passover,' Numb. ix. 13. because his mind was full of secular cares, and his thoughts were taken up about his journey. When we are upon self-examining work, we had not need to be in hurry, or have any distracting thoughts, but to retire and lock ourselves up in our closet, that we may be more intent in the work.

Qu. 2. *What is self-examination?*

Ans. It is a setting up a court of conscience, and keeping a

register there, that by a strict scrutiny a man may see how matters stand between God and his soul. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition, an heart-anatomy, whereby a man takes his heart as a watch, all in pieces, and sees what is defective there. It is a dialogue with one's self, Pl. lxxvii. 7. 'I commune with my own heart.' David called himself to account, and put interrogatories to his own heart. Self-examining is a critical descant or search : as the woman in the parable did light a candle, and 'search for her lost groat,' Luke xv. 8. so conscience is the candle of the Lord ; search with this candle what thou canst find wrought by the Spirit in thee.

Qu. 3. *What is the rule by which we are to examine ourselves ?*

Ans. The rule or measure we must examine ourselves by, is, the holy scripture. We must not make fancy, or the good opinion which others have of us, the rule of which we judge of ourselves. But as the goldsmith brings his gold to the touch-stone, so must we bring our hearts to a scripture touch-stone ; 'To the law, to the testimony,' Isa. viii. 20. What saith the word ? Are we divorced from sin ? are we renewed by the Spirit ? Let the word decide whether we are fit communicants or not. We judge of colours by the sun, so we must judge of the state of our souls by the sun-light of scripture.

Qu. 4. *What are the cogent reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's supper ?*

Ans. 1. It is a duty imposed ; 'let him examine himself.' The passover was not to be eaten raw, Exod. xii. 19. To come to such an ordinance slightly, without examination, is to come in an undue manner, and is like eating the passover raw.

2. We must examine ourselves before we come, because it is not only a duty imposed, but opposed. There is nothing the heart naturally is more averse from, than self-examination : we may know that duty is good which the heart opposeth. But why doth the heart so oppose it ? Because it doth cross the tide of corrupt nature ; 'tis contrary to flesh and blood. The heart is guilty ; and doth a guilty person love to be examined ? The heart opposeth it, therefore the rather set upon it : that duty is good which the heart opposeth.

3. Because self-examining is so needful a work ; as appears, (1.) Without self-examination, a man can never tell how it is with him, whether he hath grace or not ; and this must needs be very uncomfortable. He knows not if he should die presently, what will become of him, or to what coast he shall sail, whether to hell or heaven ; as Socrates said, "I am about to die, and the gods know whether I shall be happy or miserable." How needful therefore is self-examination, that a man by search may come to know the true state of his soul, and may guess how it will go with him to eternity ?

(2.) Self-examination is needful, in respect of the excellency of the sacrament. Let him eat *de illo pane*, 'of that bread,' 1 Cor. xi. 28. that excellent bread, that consecrated bread, that bread which is not only the bread of the Lord, but the bread the Lord. Let him drink *de illo poculo*, 'of that cup;' that precious cup which is perfumed and spiced with Christ's love; that cup which holds the blood of God sacramentally. Cleopatra put a jewel in a cup, which contained the price of a kingdom: this sacred cup we are to drink of, enriched with the blood of God, is above the price of a kingdom; it is more worth than heaven: Therefore coming to such a royal feast, having whole Christ, his divine and human nature to feed on, how should we examine ourselves before hand, that we may be fit guests for such a magnificent banquet.

(3.) Self-examining is needful, because God will examine us. That was a sad question, Matth. xxii. 12. 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?' Men are lothe to ask themselves the question, "O my soul, are thou a fit guest for the Lord's table? are there not some sins thou hast to bewail? are there not some evidences for heaven that thou hast to get?" Now, when persons will not ask themselves the question, then God will bring such a question as this to them, how came ye in hither to my table not prepared? how came ye in hither with an unbelieving or profane heart? It shall be such a question as will cause an heart-trembling. God will examine a man as the chief captain did Paul, with scourging, Acts xxii. 25. 'Tis true, the best saint, if God should weigh him in the balance, would be found defective: but, when a Christian hath made an impartial search, and hath laboured to deal uprightly between God and his own soul, Christ's merits will cast in some grains of allowance into the scales.

(4.) Self-examining is needful, because of that secret corruption in the heart, which will not be found out without searching. There are in the heart *plangendæ tenebrae*, Aug. hidden pollutions. It is with a Christian, as with Joseph's brethren, when the steward accused them of having the cup, they were ready to swear they had not the cup in their sack, but upon search it was found there; little doth a Christian think what pride, atheism, uncleanness is in his heart till he searcheth. Therefore, if there be such hidden wickedness, like a spring that runs under ground, we had need examine ourselves, that finding out our secret sin, we may be humbled and repent. Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul. If corn lie long in the chaff, the chaff defiles the corn; hidden sins lain long in, defile our duties. Needful therefore it is, before we come to the holy supper, to search out these hidden sins, as Israel searched for leaven before they came to the passover.

(5.) Self-examining is needful, because without it we may easily have a cheat put upon us, Jer. xvii. 9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things.' Many a man's heart will tell him, he is fit for the Lord's table. As when Christ asked the sons of Zebedee, Mat. xx. 22. 'Are ye able to drink of the cup I shall drink of?' can ye drink such a bloody cup of suffering? 'they say unto him, we are able.' So the heart will suggest to a man, he is fit to drink of the sacramental cup, he hath on the wedding-garment. *Grande profundum est homo*, Aug. "The heart is a grand impostor." It is like a cheating tradesman, which will put one off with bad wares; the heart will put a man off with seeming grace, instead of saving. A tear or two sheweth repentance, a few lazy desires is faith: blue and red flowers that grow among the corn, look like good flowers, but they are but beautiful weeds. 'The foolish virgins' lamps looked as if they had had oil in them, but they had none. Therefore, to prevent a cheat, that we may not take false grace instead of true, we had need make a thorough disquisition and search of our hearts before we come to the Lord's table.

(6.) Self-examining is needful, because of those false fears the godly are apt to nourish in their hearts, which make them go sad to the sacrament. As they who have no grace, for want of examining, presume; so they who have grace, for want of examining, are ready to despair. Many of God's children look upon themselves through the black spectacles of fear: they fear Christ is not formed in them, they fear they have no right to the promise; and these fears in the heart cause tears in the eye: whereas, would they but search and examine, they might find they had grace. Are not their hearts humbled for sin? and what is this but the bruised reed? do they not weep after the Lord? and what are these tears but seeds of faith? do they not thirst after Christ in an ordinance; what is this but the new creature crying for the breast? Here are, you see, seeds of grace; and, would Christians examine their hearts, they might see there is something of God in them, and so their false fears would be prevented, and they might approach with comfort to these holy mysteries in the eucharist.

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MARK xiv. 22. *Jesus took Bread, &c.*

(7.) SELF-EXAMINING is needful, in respect of the danger in coming unworthily without examination, 1 Cor. xi. 27. 'He shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' *Par facit quasi Christianum trucidaret*, Grotius.—i. e. 'God reckons with him as with a crucifier of the Lord Jesus.' He doth not



drink Christ's blood, but sheds it ; and so brings that curse upon him, as the Jews, ' his blood be upon us and our children.' The virtue of Christ's blood, nothing more comfortable, the guilt of it nothing more formidable.

4. We must examine ourselves before the sacrament, in respect of the difficulty of self-examining work. Difficulty raiseth a noble spirit. Self-examining is difficult, (1.) Because it is an inward work, it lies most with the heart. External acts of devotion are easy ; to lift up the eye, to bow the knee, to read over a few prayers ; this is as easy, as for the papists to tell over a few beads : but to examine a man's self, to take the heart as a watch all in pieces, to make a scripture-trial of our fitness for the Lord's supper, this is not easy. Reflexive acts are hardest : the eye cannot see itself but by a glass ; we must have the glass of the word and conscience to see our own hearts : it is easy to spy the faults of others, but it is hard to find out our own. (2.) Self-examination is difficult, in regard of self-love. As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters : what Solomon saith of love, Prov. x. 12. ' Love covereth all sins,' is most true of self-love : a man looking upon himself in the glass of self-love (that flattering glass) his virtues appear greater than they are, and his sins lesser. Self-love makes a man rather excuse himself, than examine himself ; self-love makes one think the best of himself ; and he who hath a good opinion of himself, doth not suspect himself ; and not suspecting himself, he is not forward to examine himself. The work therefore of self-examination being so difficult, it requires the more impartiality and industry ; difficulty should be a spur to diligence.

(5.) We must examine ourselves before we come, because of the beneficialness of self-examination. The benefit is great, which way soever things turn ; if, upon examination, we find that we have no grace in truth, then the mistake is discovered, and the danger prevented ; if we find that we have grace, we may take the comfort of it. He who, upon search, finds that he hath the *minimum quod sit*, the least degree of grace, he is like one that hath found his box of evidences, he is an happy man, he is a fit guest at the Lord's table, he is heir to all the promises, he is as sure to go to heaven, as if he were in heaven already. These are the reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's table.

Qu. 5. *What must we examine ?*

Ans. (1.) Our sins. (2.) Our graces.

First, our sins. Search if any dead fly might spoil this sweet ointment. When we come to the sacrament, we should do as the Jews did before the passover ; they searched for leaven, and having found it did burn it. 1. Let us search for the leaven of pride ; this sours our holy things : we are born with a spiritual

tympany. Will an humble Christ be received into a proud heart? Pride keeps Christ out—*Intus existens prohibet alienum*.—Pride swells the heart; and Christ cannot come into the heart if it be full already. To a proud man Christ's blood hath no virtue: 'tis like *discordium* put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth its virtue. Let us search for this leaven of pride, and cast it away. 2. Let us search for the leaven of avarice. The Lord's supper is a spiritual mystery, it represents Christ's body and blood; what should an earthly heart do here? The earth puts out the fire; earthliness quencheth the fire of holy love. The earth is *elementum gravissimum*, it cannot ascend. A soul belimed with earth cannot ascend to heavenly cogitation, Col. iii. 5. 'Covetousness which is idolatry.' Will Christ come into that heart where there is an idol? Search for this leaven before you come to this ordinance. How can an earthly heart converse with that God which is a spirit? can a clod of earth kiss the sun? 3. Search for the leaven of hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1. 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.' Aquinas describes it *simulatio virtutis*: hypocrisy is a counterfeiting of virtue. The hypocrite is a living pageant, he only makes a shew of religion: he gives God his knee, but no heart; and God gives him bread and wine in the sacrament but no Christ. Oh let us search for this leaven of hypocrisy, and burn it?

*Secondly*, We must examine our graces. I shall instance only in one, our knowledge.

1. Whether we have knowledge.

2. Whether it be rightly qualified.

(1.) We are to examine whether we have knowledge, else we cannot give God a reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Knowledge is a necessary requisite in a communicant: without knowledge there can be no fitness for the sacrament: a person cannot be fit to come to the Lord's table who hath no goodness, but without knowledge the mind is not good, Prov. xix. 2. Some say they have good hearts though they want knowledge; as if one should say, his eye is good, but it wants sight. Under the law when the plague of leprosy was in a man's head, the priest was to pronounce him unclean. The ignorant person hath the plague in his head, he is unclean: ignorance is the womb of lust, 1 Pet. i. 14. Therefore it is requisite, before we come, to examine ourselves what knowledge we have in the main fundamentals of religion. Let it not be said of us, that 'to this day the vail is upon our hearts,' 2 Cor. iii. 15. But sure in this intelligent age, we cannot but have some insight into the mysteries of the gospel. I rather fear, we are like Rachel, who was fair and well-fighted, but barren: therefore,

{2.) Let us examine whether our knowledge be rightly qualified. 1. Is it influential? doth our knowledge warm our heart: *Claritas intellectu parit, ardorem in effectu*. Saving knowledge doth not only direct, but quicken: 'tis the light of life, John viii. 12. 2. Is our knowledge practical? We hear much; do we love the truths we know? That is the right knowledge which doth not only adorn the mind, but reform the life.

*Secondly*, This solemn preparing for the sacrament, as it consists in examining ourselves, so in dressing our souls before we come. And this soul-dress is in two things;

1. Washing in the laver of repenting tears; to come to this ordinance with the guilt of any sin unrepented of, makes way for the further hardening of our heart, and giving Satan fuller possession of us, Zech. xii. 10. 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced and shall mourn for him.' The cloud of sorrow must drop into tears. We must grieve as for the pollution, so for the unkindness in every sin. To sin against Christ's love who died for us. When Peter thought of Christ's love, who called him out of his unregeneracy, made him an apostle, and carried him up to the mount of transfiguration, where he saw the glory of heaven in a vision; and then, to think of his denying Christ, it broke his heart, 'he wept bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. To think, before we come to a sacrament, of the sins against the bowels-mercies of God the Father, the bleeding wounds of God the Son, the blessed inspirations of God the Holy Ghost; it is enough to broach our eyes with tears, and put us into an holy agony of grief and compunction. And we must be so distressed for sin, as to be divorced from sin. The serpent, before he drinks, casts up his poison: in this, we must be wise as serpents; before we drink of the sacramental cup, we must cast up the poison of sin by repentance. *Ill vere plangit commissa, qui non committit plangenda*. Aug.—He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed, who doth not commit the sins he hath bewailed. And this is the dressing our souls before we come, washing in the waters of true repentance.

2. The soul-dress is the exciting and stirring up the habit of grace into a lively exercise, 2 Tim. i. 6. 'I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee,' *i. e.* the gifts and graces of the Spirit. The Greek word to stir up signifies to blow up grace into a flame. Grace is oft like fire in the embers, which needs blowing up; it is possible that even a good man may not come so well disposed to this ordinance, because he hath not before taken pains with his heart to come in due order, he hath not stirred up grace into its vigorous exercise; and so, though he doth not eat and drink damnation,

yet he doth not receive consolation in the sacrament. Thus you see what this dressing of our souls is, before we come.

*Thirdly.* This solemn preparing for the sacrament is, in begging a blessing upon the ordinance. The sacrament is not like physic, which hath an inherent operative virtue : no, but the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the co-operation of the Spirit, and a word of blessing, in the institution, Christ blessed the elements ; ‘ Jesus took bread and blessed it,’ in the text. The sacrament will no further do us good, than as it is blessed to us. We ought then, before we come, to pray for a blessing on the ordinance, that the sacrament may be not only a sign to represent, but a seal to conform, and an instrument to convey Christ and all his benefits to us. We are to pray, that this great ordinance may be poison to our sins, and food to our graces. That, as it was with Jonathan, when he had tasted the honeycomb, his ‘ eyes were enlightened,’ 1 Sam. xiv. 27. so that by our receiving this holy eucharist, our eyes may be so enlightened, as to ‘ discern the Lord’s body.’ Thus should we implore a blessing upon the ordinance, before we come. The sacrament is like a tree hung full of fruit ; but none of this fruit will fall, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

(2.) That the sacrament may be effectual to us, as there must be a due preparing for it, so a right partaking of it : which right participation of the sacrament is in three things.

1. When we draw nigh to God’s table in an humble sense of our unworthiness. We do not deserve one crumb of the bread of life ; we are poor indigent creatures, who have lost our glory and are like a vessel that is ship-wrecked ; we smite on our breasts, as the publican, ‘ God be merciful to us sinners.’ This is a right partaking of the ordinance : ’tis part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness.

2. We rightly partake of the sacrament, when at the Lord’s table we are filled with anhelations of soul, and enflamed desires after Christ, and nothing can quench our thirst but his blood, Matth. v. 6. ‘ Blessed are they that thirst.’ They are blessed not only when they are filled, but while they are thirsting.

3. A right participation of the supper is, when we receive in faith. Without faith we get no good : what is said of the word preached, ‘ It profiteth not, not being mixed with faith,’ Heb. iv. 2. is as true of the sacrament. Christ turned stones into bread ; unbelief turns the bread into stones, that it doth not nourish. Then we partake aright when we come in faith : faith hath a two-fold act, an adhering, and an applying : by the first act we go over to Christ, by the second act we bring Christ over to us, Gal. ii. 20. This is the great grace we must set a-work, Acts x. 43. Philo calls it, *fides oculata* : faith is

the eagle-eye that discerns the Lord's body ; faith causeth a virtual contact, it toucheth Christ. Christ said to Mary, ' Touch me not,' &c. John xv. 17. She was not to touch him with the hands of her body ; but he saith to us, ' Touch me,' touch me with the hand of your faith. Faith makes Christ present to the soul ; the believer hath a real presence in the sacrament. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye : Christ's essence is in heaven, but he is in a believer's heart by his light and influence, Eph. iii. 17. ' That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.' Faith is the palate which tastes Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 3. Faith makes a concoction ; it causeth the bread of life to nourish. *Crede et manducaſta*, Aug. Faith causeth a coalition, it makes us one with Christ, Eph. i. 23. Other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

*Fourthly*, Then we partake aright of the sacrament, when we receive in love.

(1.) Love to Christ. Who can see Christ pierced with a crown of thorns, sweating in his agony, bleeding on the cross, but his heart must needs be endeared in love to him ? " How can we but love him who hath given his life a ransom for us ?" Love is the spiced wine and juice of the pomegranate which we must give Christ, Cant. viii. 2. Our love to this superior and blessed Jesus must exceed our love to other things ; as the oil runs above the water. Tho' we cannot with Mary bring our costly ointment to anoint Christ's body, yet we do more than this, when we bring him our love, which is sweeter to him than all ointments and perfumes.

(2.) Love to the saints. This is a love-feast : though we must eat this supper with the bitter herbs of repentance yet not with the bitter-herbs of malice. Were it not sad, if all the meat one eats should turn to bad humours ? He who comes in malice to the Lord's table, all he eats is to his hurt : ' He eats and drinks damnation to himself,' 1 Cor. xi. 29--' Come in love.' It is with love as it is with fire ; you keep fire all the day upon the hearth, but upon special occasions you draw out the fire larger ; so, though we must have love to all, yet to the saints, who are our fellow-members, here we must draw out the fire of our love larger : and we must show the largeness of our affections to them, by prizing their persons, by chusing their company, by doing all offices of love to them, counselling them in their doubts, comforting them in their fears, supplying them in their wants. Thus one Christian may be an Ebenezer to another, and as an angel of God to him : the sacrament cannot be effectual to him who doth not receive in love. If a man drinks poison, and then takes a cordial, the cordial will do him little good ; he who hath the poison of malice in his soul, the cordial of

Christ's blood will do him no good ; come therefore in love and charity. And thus we see how we may receive the supper of the Lord, that it may be effectual to our salvation.

*Use 1.* From the whole doctrine of the sacrament, learn, how precious should a sacrament be to us. It is a sealed deed to make over the blessings of the new covenant to us, [justification, sanctification, glory.] A small piece of wax put to a parchment is made the instrument to confirm a rich conveyance or lordship to another ; so these elements in the sacrament of bread and wine, though in themselves of no great value, yet being consecrated to be seals to confirm the covenant of grace to us, so they are of more value than all the riches of the Indies.

*Use 2.* The sacrament being such an holy mystery, let us come to this holy mystery with holy hearts. There is no receiving a crucified Christ, but into a consecrated heart : Christ, in his conception, lay in a pure virgin's womb, and, at his death, his body was wrapped in clean linen, and put into a new virgin-tomb, never yet defiled with rottenness. If Christ would not lie in an unclean grave, sure he will not be received into an unclean heart, Isa. lii. 11. ' Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.' If they who did carry the vessels of the Lord were to be holy, then they who are to be the vessels of the Lord, and are to hold Christ's body and blood, ought to be holy.

*Use 3. Consolation.* Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is a most sovereign elixir, or, comfort to a distressed soul. Christ having poured out his blood, now God's justice is fully satisfied. There is in the death of Christ enough to answer all doubts. What if sin is the poison, here is the flesh of Christ an antidote against it? what if sin be red as scarlet, is not Christ's blood of a deeper colour, and can wash away sin? If Satan strikes us with his darts of temptation, here is a precious balm comes out of Christ's wounds to heal us, Isa. liii. 5. What though we feed upon the bread of affliction, as long as in the sacrament we feed upon the bread of life? So that Christ received aright sacramentally, is an universal medicine for the healing, and an universal cordial for the cheering of our distressed souls.

III. The benefits of our redemption are applied to us by prayer.

## OF PRAYER.

PSALM cix. 4. *But I give myself to prayer.*

I SHALL not expatiate upon prayer at large, being to speak more fully to it in the Lord's prayer. But to the words, 'I give myself to prayer.' It is one thing to pray, and another thing to be given to prayer: he who prays frequently, is said to be given to prayer; as he who often distributes alms, is said to be given to charity. Prayer is a glorious ordinance, it is the soul's trading with heaven: God comes down to us by his Spirit, and we go up to him by prayer.

Qu. 1. *What is prayer?*

Ans. "It is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ."

I. "Prayer is an offering up of our desires." ] Therefore it is called a making known of our requests, Phil. iv. 6. In prayer we come as humble petitioners, begging to have our suit granted.

II. 'Tis "offering up our desires to God." ] Prayer is not to be made to any but God. The papists pray to saints and angels, but they know not our grievances, Isa. lxiii. 16. 'Abraham is ignorant of us.' And all angel-worship is forbidden, Col. ii. 18, 19. We must not pray to any but whom we may believe in, Rom. x. 14. 'How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?' But we cannot believe in an angel, therefore we must not pray to him.

Qu. *Why must prayer be made only to God?*

Ans. 1. Because he only hears prayer, Ps. lxxv. 2. 'O thou that hearest prayer.' Hereby God is known to be the true God, in that he hears prayer, 1 Kings xviii. 37. 'Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God.'

2. Because God only can help. We may look to second causes, and cry, as the woman did, 2 Kings vi. 26. 'Help, my Lord, O king. And he said if the Lord doth not help thee, whence shall I help thee?' If we are in outward distress, God must send from heaven and save: if we are in inward agonies, he only can pour in the oil of joy; therefore prayer is to be made to him only.

III. "For things agreeable to his will." ] When we pray for outward things, for riches or children, perhaps God sees these things are not good for us: our prayers must comport with God's will. We may pray absolutely for grace; 'for this is the will of God, our sanctification,' 1 Thess. iv. 4. There might

be no strange incense offered, Exod. xxx. 9. When we pray for things which are not agreeable to God's will, it is offering strange incense.

IV. "In the name of Christ." ] To pray in the name of Christ, is not only to mention Christ's name in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of Christ's merits, 1 Sam. vii. 9. 'Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it,' &c. We must carry the lamb Christ in the arms of our faith, and so we prevail in prayer. When Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry, and struck him with leprosy, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. When we do not pray in Christ's name, in the hope of his mediation, we offer up incense, without a priest; and what can we expect but to meet with rebukes, and to have God answer us by terrible things?

Qu. *What are the parts of prayer?*

Ans. 1. There is the confessory part, which is the acknowledgement of sin. 2. The supplicatory part, when we either deprecate and pray against some evil, or request the obtaining of some good. 3. The gratulatory part, when we give thanks for mercies received, which is the most excellent part of prayer. In petition we act like men, in giving of thanks, we act like angels.

Qu. 3. *What are the several sorts of prayer?*

Ans. 1. There is mental prayer, in the mind, 1 Sam. i. 13. 2dly, Vocal, Ps. lxxvii. 1. 3dly, Ejaculatory, which is a sudden and short elevation of the heart to God, Neh. ii. 4. 'So I prayed to the God of heaven.' 4thly, Conceived prayer; when we pray for those things which God puts into our heart, Rom. vii. 26. 'The Spirit helps us with sighs and groans.' Both the expressions of the tongue, so far as they are right, and the impressions of the heart, are from the Spirit. 5thly, Prescribed prayer: our Saviour hath set us a pattern of prayer. God prescribed a set form of blessing for the priests, Numb. vi. 23. 6thly, Public prayer; when we pray in the audience of others. Prayer is more powerful, when many join and unite their forces. *Vis unita fortior*, Matth. xviii. 19. 7thly, Private prayer; when we pray by ourselves, Matth. vi. 9. 'Enter into thy closet.'

Qu. 4. *What is that prayer which is most like to prevail with God?*

Ans. When prayer is rightly qualified. That is a good medicine which hath the right ingredients; that prayer is good, and is most like to prevail with God, which hath these seven ingredients in it:

(1.) Prayer must be mixed with faith, James i. 6. 'But let him pray in faith.' Believe God hears, and will in his due time grant; believe God's love and truth. Believe that he is



love, therefore will not deny you; believe that he is truth, therefore will not deny himself. 'Faith sets prayer a work.' Faith is to prayer, as the feather is to the arrow, faith feathers the arrow of prayer, and makes it fly swifter, and pierce the throne of grace. Prayer that is faithless is fruitless.

(2.) A melting prayer, Pf. li. 17. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart.' The incense was to be beaten, to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer. O, faith a Christian, I cannot pray with such gifts and elocution as others; as Moses said, 'I am not eloquent:' but canst thou weep? Doth thy heart melt in prayer? Weeping prayer prevails. Tears drop as pearls from the eye. 'Jacob wept and made supplication; and had power over the angel,' Hosea xii. 4.

(3.) Prayer must be fired with zeal and fervency, James v. 16. 'Effectual fervent prayer prevails much.' Cold prayers, like cold suitors, never speed. Prayer, without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Prayer is called a 'pouring out of the soul,' 1 Sam. i. 15. to signify vehemency. Formality starves prayer. Prayer is compared to incense, Pf. cxli. 2. 'Let my prayer be set forth as incense.' Hot coals were to be put to the incense, to make it odoriferous and fragrant: fervency of affection is like coals put to the incense; it makes prayer ascend as a sweet perfume. Christ prayed with strong cries. Heb. v. 7. *Clamor iste penetrat nubes*, Luther. Fervent prayer, like a petard set against heaven's gates, makes them fly open. To cause holy fervour and ardour of soul in prayer, consider, 1. Prayer without fervency, is no prayer; it is speaking not praying: lifeless prayer is no more prayer, than the picture of a man is a man. One may say, as Pharaoh, Gen. xli. 'I have dreamed a dream:' It is dreaming, not praying. Life and fervency baptizeth a duty, and gives it a name. 2. Consider in what need we stand of those things which we ask in prayer. We come to ask the favour of God; and if we have not his love, all we enjoy is cursed to us. We pray that our souls may be washed in Christ's blood; and if he wash us not we have 'no part in him,' John xiii. 8. When will we be in earnest, if not when we are praying for the life of our souls? 3. It is only fervent prayer hath the promise of mercy affixed to it, Jer. xxix. 14. 'Then shall ye find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.' It is dead praying without a promise; and the promise is made only to ardency. The Aediles among the Romans, had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them: God's heart is ever open to fervent prayer.

(4.) Prayer must be sincere. Sincerity is the silver thread which must run through the whole duties of religion. Sincerity in prayer is, when we have gracious holy ends in prayer; our

prayer is not so much for temporal mercies as spiritual. We send out our prayer, as a merchant sends out his ship, that we may have large returns of spiritual blessings : our aim in prayer is, that our heart may be more holy, that we may have more communion with God ; our design is, that by prayer we may increase the stock of grace. Prayer which wants a good aim, wants a good issue.

(5.) Prayer that will prevail with God, must have a fixation of mind, Pl. lvii. 7. ‘ O God, my heart is fixed.’ Since the fall, the mind is like quick-silver, which will not fix, it hath *principium motus*, but *non quietes* : the thoughts will be roving and dancing up and down in prayer, just as if a man that is travelling to such a place, should run out of the road, and wander he knows not whither. In prayer, we are travelling to the throne of grace, but how often do we by vain cogitations, turn out of the road ? Which is rather wandering than praying.

Qu. *But how shall we cure these vain impertinent thoughts, which do so distract us in prayer, and, we may fear, hinder the acceptance ?*

Ans. 1. Be very apprehensive in prayer of the infirmities of God’s majesty and purity. God’s eye is upon us in prayer, and we may say, as David, Pl. lvi. 8. ‘ Thou tellest my wanderings.’ The thoughts of this world make us *hog agere*, mind the duty we are about. If a man were to deliver a petition to an earthly prince, would he at that time be playing with a feather ? Set yourselves, when you pray as in God’s presence ; could you but look through the key-hole of heaven, and see how devout and intent the angels are in their worshipping of God, sure you would be ready to blush at your vain thoughts and vile impertinences in prayer.

2. If you would keep your mind fixed in prayer, keep your eye fixed, Pl. cxxiii. 1. ‘ Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.’ Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. To think to keep the heart fixed in prayer, and yet let the eye gaze, is as if one should think to keep his house safe, yet let the windows be open.

3. If you would have your thoughts fixed in prayer, get more love to God. Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love, cannot keep his thoughts off the object. He who loves the world, his thoughts run undisturbedly upon the world. Did we love God more, our minds would be more intent upon him in prayer. Were there more delight in duty there would be less distraction.

4. Implore the help of God’s spirit to fix our minds, and make them intent and serious in prayer. The ship without a pilot rather floats than sails ; that our thoughts do not float up

and down in prayer, we need the blessed Spirit to be our pilot to steer us : only God's spirit can bound the thoughts. A shaking hand may as well write a line steadily, as we can keep our hearts fixed in prayer without the Spirit of God.

5. Make holy thoughts familiar to you in your ordinary course of life. David was oft musing on God, Ps. cxxxix. 18. 'When I am awake, I am still with thee.' He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts out of prayer, will scarce have other thoughts in prayer.

6. If you would keep your mind fixed on God, watch your hearts ; not only watch them after prayer, but in prayer. The heart will be apt to give you the slip and have a thousand vagaries in prayer. We read of angels ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder : so, in prayer you shall find your hearts ascending to heaven, and in a moment descending upon earthly objects. O Christians, watch your hearts in prayer. What a shame is it to think, that when we are speaking to God in prayer, our hearts should be in the fields, or in our counting-house, or one way or other, running upon the devil's errand?

7. Labour for more degrees of grace. The more ballast the ship hath, the better it sails ; so the more the heart is ballasted with grace the steadier it will sail to heaven in prayer.

(6.) Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative : God loves to have us plead with him, and use arguments in prayer. See how many arguments Jacob used in prayer, Gen. xxxii. 11. 'Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother.' The arguments he used, are 1. From God's command, *ver.* 9. 'Thou saidst to me return to thy country ;' as if he had said, I did not take this journey of my own head, but by thy direction ; therefore thou canst not but in honour protect me. And he useth another argument, *ver.* 12. 'Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.' Lord, wilt thou go back from thy own promise ? Thus he was argumentative in prayer ; and he got not only a new blessing, but a new name, *ver.* 28. 'Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou had power with God, and prevailed.' God loves to be overcome with strength of argument. Thus, when we come to God in prayer for grace, be argumentative : Lord, thou callest thyself the God of all grace ; and whither would we go with our vessel, but to the fountain ; Lord, thy grace may be imparted, yet not impaired : hath not Christ purchased grace for poor indigent creatures ? Every drachm of grace cost a drop of blood. Shall Christ die to purchase grace for us, and shall not we have the fruit of his purchase ? Lord, It is thy delight to milk out the breast of mercy and grace, and wilt thou abridge thyself of thy own delight ? Thou hast promised to give

thy Spirit to implant grace ; can truth lie ? can faithfulness deceive ? God loves thus to be overcome with arguments in prayer.

(7.) Prayer that would prevail with God, must be joined with reformation, Job xi. 13. ‘ If thou stretch out thy hands towards him ? if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away from thee.’ Sin, lived in, makes the heart hard, and God’s ear deaf. ’Tis foolish to pray against sin, and then sin against prayer, sin fly blows our prayers, Psal. lxxvi. 18. ‘ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.’ The loadstone loseth its virtue when bespread with garlic ; so doth prayer when polluted with sin. The incense of prayer must be offered upon the altar of an holy heart.

Thus you see what is that prayer which is most likely to prevail with God.

*Use 1.* It reproves, 1. Such as pray not at all : ’Tis made the note of a reprobate, he calls not upon God, Psal. cxliv. Doth he think to have an alms, who never asks it ? do they think to have mercy from God, who never seek it ? Then God should befriend them more than he did his own Son, Heb. v. 7. Christ offered up prayers with strong cries. None of God’s children are born dumb, Gal. iv. 6.

(2.) It reproves such as have left off prayer, a sign they never felt the fruit and comfort of it. He that leaves off prayer, a sign he leaves off to fear God, Job xv. 4. ‘ Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer, before God.’ A man that hath left off prayer is fit for any wickedness. When Saul had given over enquiring after God then he went to the witch of Endor.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* Be persons given to prayer. ‘ I give myself (saith David) to prayer.’ Pray for pardon and purity ; prayer is the golden key that opens heaven. The tree of the promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. All the benefits of Christ’s redemption are handed over to us by prayer.

*Obj.* *But I have prayed a long time for mercy, and have no answer,* Pl. lxxix. 3. ‘ *I am weary of crying.*’

*Ans.* 1. God may hear us, when we do not hear from him : as soon as prayer is made, God hears it, though he doth not presently answer. A friend may receive our letter, though he doth not presently send us an answer of it. 2. God may delay prayer, yet not deny.

*Qu.* *But why doth God delay an answer of prayer ?*

*Ans.* 1. Because he loves to hear the voice of prayer, Prov. xv. 8. ‘ The prayer of the upright is his delight.’ You let the musician play a great while ere you throw him down money, because you love to hear his music, Cant. ii. 14.

2. God may delay prayer when he will not deny, that he may humble us ; perhaps God hath spoke to us a long time in

his word to leave such sins, but we would not hear him ; therefore he lets us speak to him in prayer and seems not to hear us.

3. God may delay prayer when he will not deny, because he sees we are not yet fit for the mercy ; perhaps we pray for deliverance, we are not fit for it ; our scum is not yet boiled away ; we would have God swift to deliver, and we are slow to repent.

4. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that the mercy we pray for may be the more prized, and may be sweeter when it comes. The longer the merchant's ships stay abroad, the more he rejoiceth when they come home laden with spices and jewels ; therefore be not discouraged, but follow God with prayer : though God may delay, he will not deny. Prayer *vincit invincibilem*, it overcomes the Omnipotent, Hos. xii. 4. The Tymans tied fast their god Hercules with a golden chain, that he should not remove : the Lord was held by Moses' prayer, as with a golden chain, Exod. xxxii. 10. ' Let me alone ; ' why, what did Moses ; he only prayed. Prayer ushers in mercy. Be thy case never so sad, if thou canst but pray, thou needest not fear, Psal. x. 17. Therefore give thyself to prayer.

## OF THE PREFACE TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

*Our FATHER which art in heaven.*

HAVING (through the good providence of God) gone over the chief grounds and fundamentals of religion, and enlarged upon the decalogue or ten commandments, I shall now, at the close, speak something upon the Lord's prayer.

MATTH. vi. 9. ' After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed,' &c.

In this scripture are two things observable,

1. The introduction to the prayer.

2. The prayer itself which consists of three parts. (1.) A preface. (2.) Petitions. (3.) The conclusion.

I. The introduction to the Lord's prayer, ' After this manner pray ye.' Our Lord Jesus, in these words, prescribed to his disciples and us a directory for prayer. The ten commandments are the rule of our life, the creed is the sum of our faith, and the Lord's prayer is the pattern of our prayer. As God did prescribe Moses a pattern of the tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 9. so Christ hath here prescribed us a pattern of prayer. ' After this manner pray ye,' &c. The meaning is, let this be the rule and model according to which you frame your prayers. *Ad hanc*

*regulam preces nostras exigere neceſſe eſt*, Calvin. Not that we are tied to the words of the Lord's prayer: Chriſt ſaith not, 'After theſe words, pray ye;' but 'After this manner;' that is, let all our petitions agree and ſymbolize with the things contained in the Lord's prayer: and indeed, well may we make all our prayers conſonant and agreeable to this prayer, it being a moſt exact prayer. Tertullian calls it, *Breviarium totius evangelii*, a breviary an compendium of the goſpel: it is like an heap of maſſy gold. The exactneſs of this prayer appears, 1. In the dignity of the Author: a piece of work hath commendation from the artificer, and this prayer hath commendation from the Author; it is the Lord's prayer. As the law moral was written with the finger of God, ſo this prayer was dropt from the lips of the Son of God. *Non vox hominem ſonat, eſt Deus*. 2. The exactneſs of this prayer appears in the excellency of the matter. I may ſay of this prayer, it 'is as ſilver tried in the furnace, purified ſeven times,' Pſal. xii. 6. Never was there prayer ſo admirably and curiouſly compoſed as this. As Solomon's ſong, for its excellency, is called, 'The ſong of ſongs;' ſo may this well be called the "prayer of prayers." The matter of it is admirable, 1. For its ſuccinctneſs, 'tis ſhort and pithy, *multum in parvo*, a great deal ſaid in a few words. It requires moſt art to draw the two globes curiouſly in a little map. This ſhort prayer is a ſyſtem or body of divinity. 2. Its clearneſs. This prayer is plain and intelligible to every capacity. Clearneſs is the grace of ſpeech. 3. Its compleatneſs. This prayer contains in it the chief things that we have to aſk, or God hath to beſtow.

*Uſe.* Let us have a great eſteem of the Lord's prayer: let it be the modern pattern of all our prayers. There is a double benefit ariſeth from framing our petitions ſuitably to the Lord's prayer. 1. Hereby error in prayer is prevented: 'tis not eaſy to write wrong after this copy: we cannot eaſily err, having our pattern before us. 2. Hereby mercies requested are obtained: for the apoſtle aſſures us, God will hear us, when we pray, 'according to his will,' 1 John v. 14. And ſure we pray according to his will, when we pray according to his pattern he hath ſet us. So much for the introduction to the Lord's prayer, 'After this manner pray ye.'

II. The prayer itſelf, which conſiſts of three parts. (1.) A preface. (2.) Petitions. (3.) The concluſion.

*Fiſt*, The preface to the prayer: (1.) 'Our Father.' (2.) 'Which art in heaven,' To begin with the fiſt words of the preface.

'Our Father.' Father is ſometimes taken perſonally, John xiv. 28. 'My Father is greater than I:' but Father in the text is taken eſſentially for the whole Deity. This title, Father,

teacheth us to whom we must address ourselves in prayer; to God alone. Here is no such thing in the Lord's prayer, as, O ye saints or angels that are in heaven, hear us; but, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

Qu. *In what order must we direct our prayers to God? Here is only the Father named: may not we direct our prayers to the Son, and Holy Ghost?*

Ans. Though the Father only be named in the Lord's prayer, yet the other two Persons are not hereby excluded: the Father is mentioned because he is first in order; but the Son and Holy Ghost are included, because they are the same in essence. As all the three Persons subsist in one God-head; so, in our prayers, tho' we name but one Person, we must pray to all. To come then more closely to the first words of the preface, 'Our Father.' Princes on earth give themselves titles expressing their greatness, as "High and Mighty:" God might have done so, and expressed himself thus, "Our king of glory, our Judge:" but he gives himself another title, 'Our Father,' an expression of love and condescension. God, that he might encourage us to pray to him, represents himself under this sweet notion of a Father, 'Our Father.' *Dulce nomen Patris.* The name Jehovah carries majesty in it, the name Father, carries mercy in it.

Qu. 1. *In what sense is God a Father?*

Ans. 1. By creation; it is he that hath made us, Acts xvii. 28. 'We are his offspring,' Mal. ii. 10. 'Have we not all one Father?' Hath not one God created us? but there is little comfort in this; for so God is Father to the devils by creation; but he that made them will not save them.

2. God is a Father by election, having chosen a certain number to be his children, whom he will entail heaven upon, Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in him.'

3. God is a Father by special grace; he consecrates the elect by his Spirit, and infuseth a supernatural principle of holiness, therefore they are said to be born of God, 1 John iii. 9. Such only as are sanctified can say. 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

Qu. 1. *What is the difference between God being the Father of Christ, and the Father of the elect?*

Ans. God is the Father of Christ in a more glorious transcendent manner. Christ hath the primogeniture; he is the eldest Son, a Son by eternal generation, Prov. viii. 23. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.' Isa. liii. 8. 'Who shall declare his generation?' Christ is a Son to the Father; yet so as he is of the same nature with the Father, having all the communicable properties of the God-head belonging to him: but we are sons of God by adoption and

grace, Gal. iv. 5. 'That we might receive the adoption of sons.'

Qu. 3. *What is that which makes God our Father?*

Ans. Faith: Gal. iii. 26. 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' An unbeliever may call God his Creator, and his Judge, but not his Father. Faith doth legitimate us, and make us of the blood-royal of heaven: 'Ye are the children of God by faith.' Baptism makes us church-members, but faith makes us children: without faith the devil can shew as good a coat of arms as we.

Qu. 4. *How doth faith make God to be our Father?*

Ans. As faith is an uniting grace; by faith we have coalition and union with Christ and so the kindred comes in; being united to Christ, the natural Son, we become adopted sons: God is the Father of Christ; faith makes us Christ's brethren, Heb. ii. 11. and so God comes to be our Father.

Qu. 5. *Wherein doth it appear that God is the best Father?*

Ans. 1. In that he is most ancient, Dan. vii. 9. 'The ancient of days did sit.' A figurative representation of God who was before all time, this may cause veneration.

2. God is the best Father, because he is perfect, Mat. v. 48. 'Your Father which is in heaven is perfect;' he is perfectly good. Earthly fathers are subject to infirmities: Elias (though a prophet) 'was a man of like passions,' Jam. v. 17. but God is perfectly good. All the perfection we can arrive at in this life is sincerity: we may a little resemble God, but not equal him; he is infinitely perfect.

3. God is the best Father, in respect of wisdom, 1 Tim. i. 17. 'The only wise God.' He hath a perfect idea of wisdom in himself: he knows the fittest means to bring about his own designs; the angels light at his lamp. In particular, this is one branch of his wisdom, that he knows what is best for us. An earthly parent knows not, in some intricate cases, how to advise his child, or what may be best for him to do: but God is a most wise father, he knows what is best for us, he knows what comfort is best for us; he keeps his cordials for fainting, 2 Cor. vii. 6. 'God who comforteth them that are cast down:' he knows when affliction is best for us, and when it is fit to give a bitter potion, 1 Pet. i. 6. 'If need be, ye are in heaviness.' He is the only wise God; he knows how to make evil things work for good to his children, Rom. viii. 28. He can make a sovereign treacle of poison: thus he is the best Father for wisdom.

4. He is the best Father, because the most loving, 1 John iv. 16. 'God is love.' He who causeth bowels of affection in others, must needs have more bowels himself: *quod efficit tale*; the affections in parents are but marble and adamant, in con-



parison of God's love to his children : he gives them the cream of his love, electing love, saving love, Zeph. iii. 17. ' He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing : ' no father like God for love ; if thou art his child, thou canst not love thy own soul so entirely as he loves thee. )

5. God is the best Father, for riches : God hath land enough to give all his children, he hath unsearchable riches, Eph. iii. 8. He gives the hidden manna, the tree of life, rivers of joy, God hath treasures that cannot be completed, gates of pearl : who ever saw gates of pearl ? pleasures that cannot be ended. Earthly fathers, if they should be ever giving, they would have nothing left to give : God is ever giving to his children, yet hath not the less : his riches are imparted not impaired : like the sun that still shines, yet hath not the less light. He cannot be poor who is infinite. Thus God is the best Father ; he gives more to his children, than any father or prince can bestow.

6. God is the best Father, because he can reform his children. A father, when his son takes bad courses, knows not how to make him better ; but God knows how to make the children of the election better ; he can change their hearts. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the faints, God soon altered his course, and set him a praying, Acts ix. 11. ' Behold, he prayeth.' None of those who belong to the election are so rough-cast and unhewn, but God can polish them with his grace, and make them fit for the inheritance.

7. God is the best Father, because he never dies, 1 Tim. vi. 16. ' Who only hath immortality.' Earthly fathers die, and their children are exposed to many injuries, but God lives for ever, Rev. i. 8. ' I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.' God's crown hath no successors.

Qu. 6. *Wherein lies the dignity of such as have God for their Father ?*

Ans. 1. They have greater honour than is conferred on the princes of the earth ; they are precious in God's esteem, Isa. xliii. 4. ' Since thou wast precious in my eyes, thou hast been honourable ; ' the wicked are dross, Pf. cxix. 119. and chaff, Pf. i. 4. but God numbers his children, among his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. He writes all his children's names in the book of life, Phil. iv. 9. ' Whose names are in the book of life.' Among the Romans the names of their senators were written down in a book, *patres conscripti* : God enrolls the names of his children, and will not blot their names out of the register, Rev. iii. 5. ' I will not blot his name out of the book of life.' God will not be ashamed of his children. Heb. xi. 16. ' God is not ashamed to be called your God.' One might think it were something below God, and he might disdain to father

such children as are dust and sin mingled : but he is not ashamed to be called our God ; and that we may see he is not ashamed of his children, he writes his own name upon them, Rev. iii. 12. ‘ I will write upon him the name of my God ;’ that is, I will openly acknowledge him before all the angels to be my child : I will write my name upon him, as the son bears his father’s name ; what an honour and dignity is this ?

2. God confers honourable titles upon his children : he calls them the excellent of the earth, Pf. xvi. 2. or the magnificent, as Junias renders it. They must needs be excellent, who are *e regio sanguine nati*, of the blood-royal of heaven ; they are the spiritual phoenixes of the world, the glory of the creation. God calls his children his glory, Isa. xlv. 13. ‘ Israel my glory.’ God honours his children with the title of kings, Rev. i. 6. ‘ And hath made us kings.’ All God’s children are kings ; though they have not earthly kingdoms, yet, 1. They carry a kingdom about with them, Luke xvii. 21. ‘ The kingdom of God is within you ;’ grace is a kingdom set up in the hearts of God’s children ; they are kings to rule over their sins, to bind those kings in chains, Pf. cxlix. 8. 2. They are like kings ; they have their *insignia regalia*, their ensigns of royalty and majesty. 1. They have their crown ; in this life they are kings in a disguise ; they are not known, therefore they are exposed to poverty and reproach ; they are kings in a disguise ; 1 John iii. 2. ‘ Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ Why, what shall we be ? Every son of God shall have his crown of glory, 1 Pet. v. 4. and white robes, Rev. vi. 11. Robes signify dignity, and white signifies sanctity.

3. This is their honour who have God for their Father they are all heirs : the youngest son is an heir. 1. God’s children are heirs to the things of this life : God being their Father, they have the best title to earthly things, they have a sanctified right to them ; though they have often the least share, yet they have the best right ; and they have a blessing with what they have, *i. e.* God’s love and favour. Others may have more of the venison, but God’s children have more of the blessing : thus they are heirs to the things of this life. 2. They are heirs to the other world ; ‘ heirs of salvation,’ Heb. i. 14. ‘ Joint heirs with Christ,’ Rom. viii. 17. They are co-sharers with Christ in glory. Among men commonly the eldest son carries away all, but God’s children are all joint-heirs with Christ, they have a co-partnership with him in his riches. Hath Christ a place in the celestial mansions ? so have the saints, John xiv. 2. ‘ In my Father’s house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.’ Hath he his Father’s love ? so have they, Pf. cxlvi. 8. John xvii. 26. ‘ That the love wherewith thou hast

loved me, may be in them.' Doth Christ sit upon a throne? so do God's children, Rev. iii. 21. What an high honour is this?

4. God makes his children equal in honour to the angels, Luke xx. 36. They are equal to the angels: nay those saints, who have God for their father, are in some sense superior to the angels; for Jesus Christ having taken our nature, *naturam nostram nobilitavit*, Aug. hath ennobled and honoured it above the angelical, Heb. ii. 16. God hath made his children, by adoption, nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are the friends of Christ, believers are the members of Christ, and this honour have all the saints. Thus you see the dignity of such as have God for their Father. What a comfort is this to God's children, who are here despised, and loaded with calumnies and invectives? 1 Cor. iv. 14. 'We are made as the filth of the world,' &c. But God will put honour upon his children at the last day, and crown them with immortal bliss, to the envy of their adversaries.

Qu. 7. *How may we know that God is our Father? All cannot say, 'Our Father:' the Jews boasted that God was their Father, John viii. 56. 'We have one Father, even God.' Christ tells them their pedigree, ver. 44. 'Ye are of your father the devil.' They who are of satanical spirits, and make use of their power to beat down the power of Godliness, cannot say, God is their Father, they may say, Our father which art in hell. Well then how may we know that God is our Father?*

Ans. (1.) By having a filial disposition: this is seen in four things, 1. To melt in tears for sin: a child weeps for offending his father. When Christ looked on Peter, and he remembered his sin in denying Christ, he fell a weeping. Clemens Alexandrinus reports of Peter, he never heard a cock crow, but he wept. This is a sign that God is our Father; when the heart of stone is taken away, and there is a gracious thaw in the heart; it melts in tears for sin; and he who hath a child-like heart, mourns for sin in a spiritual manner, as it is sin: he grieves for it, 1. As it is an act of pollution. Sin deflowers the virgin-soul; it defaceth God's image; it turns beauty into deformity; 'tis called the 'plague of the heart,' 1 Kings viii. 38. It is the spirits of evil distilled. A child of God mourns for the defilement of sin; sin hath a blacker aspect than hell. 2. He who hath a child-like heart, grieves for sin, as it is an act of enmity. Sin is diametrically opposite to God. It is called a walking contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 40. 'If they shall confess their iniquity and that they have walked contrary to me.' Sin doth all it can to spight God; if God be of one mind, sin will be of another; sin would not only unthrone God, but it strikes at his very being; if sin could help it, God should be no longer God. A

child-like heart grieves for this ; O, faith he, that I should have so much enmity in me, that my will should be no more subdued to the will of my heavenly Father ! This springs a leak of godly sorrow. 3. A child-like heart weeps for sin, as it is an act of ingratitude ; sin is an abuse of God's love ; it is taking the jewels of God's mercies, and making use of them to sin : God hath done more for his children than others ; he hath planted his grace, and given them some intimations of his favour ; and to sin against kindness, dyes a sin in grain, and makes it crimson : like Absalom, who, as soon as his Father kissed him, and took him into favour, plotted treason against him : nothing so melts a child-like heart in tears, as sins of unkindness : O that I should sin against the blood of a Saviour, and the bowels of a Father ! I condemn ingratitude in my child, yet I am guilty of ingratitude against my heavenly Father : this opens a vein of godly sorrow, and makes the heart bleed afresh : certainly this evidenceth God to be our Father, when he hath given us this child-like frame of heart, to weep for sin as it is sin, an act of pollution, enmity, ingratitude : a wicked man may mourn for the bitter fruit of sin, but only a child of God can grieve for the odious nature of sin. (1.) A filial (or child-like) disposition is to be full of sympathy : we lay to heart the dishonours reflected upon our heavenly Father, when we see God's worship adulterated, his truth mingled with the poison of error, it is as a sword in our bones, to see God's glory suffer, Ps. cxix. 258. ' I beheld the transgressors and was grieved : Homer describing Agamemnon's grief when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, brings in all his friends weeping and condoling with him ; so, when God is dishonoured we sympathize, and are as it were clad in mourning. A child that hath any good nature, is cut to the heart to hear his father reproached : an heir of heaven takes a dishonour done to God more heinous than a disgrace done to himself.

(3.) A filial disposition, is to love our heavenly father ; he is unnatural that doth not love his father. God who is crowned with excellency, is the proper object of delight : and every true child of God faith, as Peter, ' Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' But who will not say he loves God ? if ours be a true genuine love to our heavenly Father, it may be known, 1st, By the effects : 1. Then we have an holy fear ; there is a fear which ariseth from love to God, that is, we fear the loss of the visible tokens of God's presence, 1 Sam. iv. 13. ' Eli's heart trembled for the ark.' It is not said his heart trembled for his two sons Hophni and Phineas ; but his heart trembled for the ark, because the ark was the special sign of God's presence ; and if that were taken, the glory was departed. He who loves his heavenly Father, fears lest the tokens of his presence should be

removed, lest profaneness should break in like a flood, lest popery should get head, and God should go from a people : the presence of God in his ordinances is the glory and strength of a nation. The Trojans had the image of Pallas, and they had an opinion that as long as that image was preserved among them, they should never be conquered : so long as God's presence is with a people, so long they are safe ; every true child of God fears lest God should go, and the glory depart. Try by this, whether we have a filial disposition : do we love God, and doth this love cause fear and jealousy ? are we afraid lest we should lose God's presence, lest the Sun of righteousness remove out of our horizon ? Many are afraid lest they should lose some of their worldly profits, but not lest they lose the presence of God ; if they may have peace and trading, they care not what become of the ark of God. A true child of God fears nothing so much as the loss of his father's presence, Hos. ix. 12. ' Wo to them when I depart from them.' 2. Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his day, Isa. lviii. 13. ' If thou call the sabbath a delight.' The ancients called this *regina dierum*, the queen of days. If we love our Father in heaven, we spend this day in devotion, in reading, hearing, meditating ; on this day manna falls double. God sanctified the sabbath ; he made all the other days in the week, but he hath sanctified this day ; this day he hath crowned with a blessing. 3. Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his children, 1 John v. 1. ' Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.' If we love God, the more we see of God in any the more we love them ; we love them though they are poor : a child loves to see his father's picture, though hung in a mean frame ; we love the children of our father, though they are persecuted, 1 Tim. i. 16. ' Onesiphorus was not ashamed of my chain.' Constantine did kiss the hole of Paphnusus' eye, because he suffered the loss of his eye for Christ : it appears they have no love to God, who have no love to his children ; they care not for their company : they have a secret disgust and antipathy against them : hypocrites pretend great reverence to the saints departed, they canonize dead saints but persecute living : I may say of these, as the apostle, Heb. xii. 8. ' They are bastards not sons.' 4th Effect of love, if we love our heavenly Father, then we will be advocates for him, and stand up in the defence of his truth ; he who loves his father will plead for him when he is traduced and wronged ; he hath no child-like heart, no love to God, who can hear God's name dishonoured, and be silent. Doth Christ appear for him on earth ? Such as dare not own God and religion in times of danger, God will be ashamed to be called their God ; it would be a reproach to him to have such children as will not own him. 2dly, A child-like

love to God is known, as by the effects, so by the degree ; it is a superior love. We love our Father in heaven above all other things ; above estate, or relations, as oil runs above the water, Pf. lxxiii. 25. A child of God seeing a supereminency of goodness, and a constellation of all beauties in God, he is carried out in love to him in the highest measure : as God gives his children such a love as he doth not bestow upon the wicked, electing love ; so God's children give such a love as they bestow upon none else, adoring love ; they give him the flower and spirits of their love ; they love him with a love joined with worship, this spiced wine they keep only for their Father to drink of, Cant. viii. 2. (4.) A child-like disposition is seen in honouring our heavenly Father, Mal. i. 6. ' A son honoureth his father.'

*Qu. How do we shew our honour to our Father in heaven ?*

*Ans.* 1. By having a reverential awe of God upon us, Lev. xxv. 17. ' Thou shalt fear thy God.' This reverential fear of God, is when we dare do nothing that he hath forbidden in his word, Gen. xxxix. 6. ' How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' It is the part of the honour a son gives to a father, he fears to displease him. (2.) We shew our honour to our heavenly Father, by doing all we can to exalt God, and make his excellencies shine forth ; though we cannot lift up God higher in heaven, yet we may lift him higher in our hearts, and in the esteem of others. When we speak well of God, set forth his renown, display the trophies of his goodness ; when we ascribe the glory of all we do to God, when we are the trumpeters of God's praise ; this is an honouring our Father in heaven, and a certain sign of a child-like heart, Psal. l. 23. ' Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.'

2. We may know God is our Father, by our resembling of him : the child is his father's picture, Jud. viii. 18. ' Each one resembled the children of a king : ' every child of God resembles the king of heaven. Herein God's adopting children and man's differ : a man adopts one for his son and heir, that doth not at all resemble him ; but whosoever God adopts for his child, is like him ; he not only bears his heavenly Father's name, but image, Col. iii. 10. ' And have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him.' He who hath God for his Father, resembles God in holiness : holiness is the glory of the God-head, Exod. xv. 11. The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of his essence. He who hath God for his Father, partakes of the divine nature ; though not of the divine essence, yet of the divine likeness : as the seal sets its print and likeness upon the wax, so he who hath God for his Father, hath the print and effigies of his holiness stamped upon him, Pf. cvi. 16. ' Aaron the saint of the Lord.' Wicked men desire to be like God hereafter in glory, but do not affect to be

like him here in grace; they give it out to the world that God is their Father yet have nothing of God to be seen in them, they are unclean: they not only want his image, but hate it.

3. We may know God is our Father, by having his Spirit in us: 1. By having the intercession of the spirit; 'tis a spirit of prayer, Gal. iv. 6. 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Prayer is the soul's breathing itself into the bosom of its heavenly Father: none of God's children are born dumb; *Implet Spiritus Sanctus organum suum, & tanquam pila chordarum tangit Spiritus, Dei corda sanctorum*, Prosper. Acts xi. 11. 'Behold he prayeth:' but it is not every prayer evidenceth God's Spirit in us. Such as have no grace may excel in gifts, and affect the hearts of others in prayer, when their own hearts are not affected; as the lute makes a sweet sound in the ears of others, but itself is not sensible: how therefore shall we know our prayers are indited by God's Spirit, and so he is our Father.

*Ref.* 1. When they are not only vocal, but mental; when there are not only gifts but groans, Rom. viii. 26. The best music is in consort; the best prayer is when the heart and tongue join together in consort.

2. When they are zealous and fervent, Jam. v. 16. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' The eyes melt in prayer, the heart burns. Fervency is to prayer, as fire to the incense; it makes it ascend to heaven as a sweet perfume.

3. When prayer hath faith sprinkled in it; prayer is the key of heaven, and faith is the hand that turns it, Rom. viii. 15. 'We cry, Abba, Father.' 'We cry,' there is fervency in prayer; 'Abba, Father,' there is faith. Those prayers suffer shipwreck, which dash upon the rock of unbelief. Thus we may know God is our Father, by having his Spirit praying in us; as Christ interceeds above, so the Spirit interceeds within.

1. By having the renewing of the Spirit, which is nothing else but regeneration, which is called a being born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. This regeneration work of the Spirit is a transformation, or change of nature, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' He who is born of God, hath a new heart: new, not for substance but for qualities. The strings of a viol may be the same, but the tune is altered. Before this regeneration, there are spiritual pangs, much heart-breaking for sin. Regeneration is called a circumcision of the heart, Col. ii. 11. In circumcision there was a pain in the flesh; so in this spiritual circumcision there is a pain in the heart, there is much sorrow arising from the sense of guilt and wrath. The jailor's trembling, Acts xvi. 30. was a pang in the new birth. God's spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a

spirit of adoption. This blessed work of regeneration spreads over the whole soul: it irradiates the mind, it consecrates the heart, and reforms the life: tho' regeneration be but in part, yet it is in every part, 1 Thess. v. 13. regeneration is the signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost upon the soul; the new born Christian is bespangled with the jewels of the graces, which are the angels' glory. Regeneration is the spring of all true joy: at our first birth we come weeping into the world, but at our new birth there is cause of rejoicing: for now, God is our Father, and we are begotten to a lively hope of glory, 1 Pet. i. 3. We may try by this our relation to God. Hath a regenerating work of God's Spirit passed upon our souls? are we made of another spirit, humble and heavenly? this is a good sign of sonship, and we may say, 'Our father which art in heaven.' 3. By having the conduct of the Spirit; we are led by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 14. 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' God's Spirit doth not only quicken us in our regeneration, but leads us on till we come to the end of our faith, salvation. It is not enough the child have life, but he must be led every step by the nurse, Hos. xi. 3. 'I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms.' Their arms, as the Israelites had the cloud and pillar of fire to go before them, and be a guide to them; so God's Spirit is a guide to go before us, and lead us into all truth, and counsel us in all our doubts, and influence us in all our actions, Ps. lxxiii. 24. 'Thou shalt guide me by thy counsels.' None can call God Father, but such as have the conduct of the Spirit. Try then what spirit you are led by: such as are led by a spirit of envy, lust, avarice, these are not led by the Spirit of God; it were blasphemy for them to call God Father: these are led by the spirit of Satan and may say, "Our Father which art in hell." 4. By having the witness of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' This witness of the Spirit, suggesting that God is our Father, is not a vocal witness, or voice from heaven: 'the Spirit in the word witnesseth:' the Spirit, in the word faith, he who is so qualified who is a hater of sin, and a lover of holiness, is a child of God, and God is his Father: If I can find such qualifications wrought, here is the Spirit witnessing with my spirit, that I am a child of God. Besides, we may carry it higher; the Spirit of God witnesseth to our spirit, by making more than ordinary impressions upon our hearts, and giving some secret hints and whispers, that God hath purposes of love to us: here is a concurrent witness of the Spirit with conscience, that we are heirs of heaven, and God is our Father; this witness is better felt than expressed: this witness scatters doubts and fears, silenceth temptations. But what shall one do that hath



not this witness of the Spirit? if we want the witness of the Spirit, let us labour to find the work of the Spirit: if we have not the Spirit testifying, labour to have it sanctifying, and that will be a support to us.

4. If God be our Father, we are of peaceable spirits, Matth. v. 9. 'Blessed are the peace-makers, they shall be called the children of God.' Grace infuseth a sweet, amicable disposition; it files off the ruggedness of men's spirits: it turns the lion-like fierceness into a lamb-like gentleness, Isa. xi. 7. They who have God to be their Father, follow peace as well as holiness. God the Father is called the 'God of peace,' Heb. xiii. 20. God the Son, the 'prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6. God the Holy Ghost is a 'Spirit of peace:' it is called 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' Eph. iv. 3. The more peaceable, the more like God. It is a bad sign God is not their Father, 1*st*, Who are fierce and cruel, as if, with Romulus, they had sucked the milk of an wolf, Rom. iii. 17. 'The way of peace have they not known,' they sport in mischief; these are they who are of a persecuting spirit as Maximinus, Dioclesian, Antiochus, who (as Eusebius) took more tedious journeys, and ran more hazards in vexing and persecuting the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. These furies cannot call God Father; if they do, they will have as little comfort in saying Father, as Dives had in hell, when he said, 'Father Abraham,' Luke xvi. 24. 2*d*<sup>y</sup>, Who are makers of divisions? Rom. xvi. 17. 'Mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them.' Such as are born of God, are makers of peace: what shall we think of such as are makers of divisions? will God father these? the devil made the first division in heaven; they may call the devil father: they may give the cloven foot in their coat of arms: their sweetest music is in discord; they unite to divide. Samson's fox tails were tied together, only to set the Philistines corn on fire, Judges xv. 5. Papists unite, only to set the church's peace on fire. Satan's kingdom grows up by divisions. St. Chrysostom observes of the church of Corinth, when many converts were brought in, Satan knew no better way to damn up the current of religion, than to throw in an apple of strife, and divide them into parties: one was for Paul, and another for Apollos, but few for Christ. Would not Christ have his coat rent, and can he endure to have his body rent? Sure God will never father them who are not sons of peace: of all them whom God hates, he is named for one, 'who is a sower of discord among brethren,' Prov. vi. 19.

5. If God be our Father: then we love to be near God, and have converse with him. An ingenuous child delights to approach near to his father, and go into his presence. David envied the birds that they built their nests so near God's altars,

when he was debarred his Father's house, Psal. lxxxiv. 3. True saints love to get as near to God as they can : in the word they draw near to his holy oracle, in the sacrament they draw near to his table ; a child of God delights to be in his Father's presence ; he cannot stay away long from God : he sees a sabbath day approaching, and rejoiceth : his heart hath been often melted and quickened in an ordinance ; he hath tasted the Lord is good, therefore he loves to be in his Father's presence ; he cannot keep away long from God. Such as care not for ordinances cannot say, ' Our Father which art in heaven.' Is God their Father, who cannot endure to be in his presence ?

*Use. I. Of instruction.* See the amazing goodness of God, that is pleased to enter into this sweet relation of a Father. God needed not to adopt us, he did not want a Son but we wanted a Father. God shewed power in being our Maker, but mercy in being our Father : when we were enemies, and our hearts stood out as garrisons against God, that he should conquer our stubbornness, and of enemies make us children, and write his name, and put his image upon us, and bestow a kingdom of glory ; what a miracle of mercy is this ! Every adopted child may say, ' Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Mat. xi. 26.

*2d, Branch, or Inference.* If God be a Father, then hence I infer, Whatever he doth to his children, is love.

1. If he smiles upon them in prosperity, it is love : they have the world not only with God's leave, but with his love. God saith to every child of his, as Naaman to Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 23. ' Be content, take two talents.' So saith God to his child, ' I am thy Father, take two talents.' Take health, and take my love with it : take an estate and take my love with it : take two talents : God's love is a sweetening ingredient into every mercy.

*Qu. How doth it appear that a child of God hath worldly things in love ?*

*Ans.* 1. Because he hath a good title to them. God is his Father, therefore he hath a good title. A wicked man hath a civil title to the creature, but no more ; he hath it not from the hand of a father : he is like one that takes up cloth at the draper's, and it is not paid for ; but a believer hath a good title to every foot of land he hath ; his Father hath settled it upon him.

2. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because they are sanctified to him, (1.) They make him better, and are loadstones to draw him nearer to God. (2.) He hath his Father's blessing with them. A little blest is sweet, Exod. xxiii. 25. ' He shall bless thy bread and thy water.' Esau had the venison, but Jacob got the blessing. While the wicked have

their meat sauced with God's wrath, Psal. lxxvii. 30, 31. believers have their comforts seasoned with a blessing. It was a secret blessing from God made Daniel's pulse nourish him more, and made him look fairer than they that ate of the king's meat, Dan. i. 15.

3. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because whatever he hath is an earnest of more : every bit of bread is a pledge and earnest of glory.

(2.) God being a Father, if he frown, if he dip his pen in gall, and write bitter things ; if he correct, 'tis in love : a father loves his child as well when he doth chastise and discipline him, as when he settles his land on him, Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love, I rebuke.' Afflictions are sharp arrows (saith Gregory Nazianzen) but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father. *Correctio est virtutes gymnasium* ; God afflicts with the same love he gives Christ ; he doth it to humble and purify : gentle correction is as necessary as daily bread ; nay, as needful as ordinances, as word and sacraments. There is love in all, God smites, that he may save.

(3.) God being a Father, if he desert and hide his face from his child, it is in love. Desertion is sad in itself, a short hell, Job vi. 9. When the light is withdrawn, dew falls. Yet we may see a rainbow in the cloud, the love of a Father in all this. 1<sup>st</sup>, God hereby quickens grace. Perhaps grace lay dormant, Cant. v. 2. It was as fire in the embers ; and God withdraws comfort, to invigorate and exercise grace : faith is a star sometimes shines brightest in the dark night of desertion, Jonah ii. 4. 2<sup>dly</sup>, When God hides his face from his child, yet still he is a Father, and his heart is towards his child : as Joseph, when he spake roughly to his brethren, and made them believe he would take them for spies ; still his heart was full of love, and he was fain to go aside and weep : so God's bowels yearn to his children, when he seems to look strange, Isa. liv. 8. 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.' Though God may have the look of an enemy, yet still he hath the heart of a father.

3<sup>d</sup>, Branch, or Inference. Learn hence the sad case of the wicked : they cannot say 'Our Father in heaven ;' they may say, Our Judge, but not, 'Our Father ;' they fetch their pedigree from hell, John viii. 44. 'Ye are of your father the Devil.' Such as are unclean and profane, are the spurious brood of the old serpent, and it were blasphemy for them to call God Father. The case of the wicked is deplorable : if they are in misery, they have none to make their moan to ; God is not their Father, he disclaims all kindred with them, Mat. vii. 23. 'I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity :' the wicked, dying in their sin, can expect no mercy from God

as a Father: many say, He that made them will save them; but, Isa. xxvii. 11. 'It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them.' Tho' God was their Father by creation, yet because they were not his children by adoption, 'therefore he that made them would not save them.'

*Use II. Of exhortation.* To persuade all who are yet strangers to God, to labour to come into this heavenly kindred; never leave till you can say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

*Qu. But will God be a Father to me, who have profaned his name, and been a great sinner?*

*Ans.* If thou wilt now at last seek to God by prayer, and break off thy sins, God hath the bowels of a Father for thee, and will in no wise cast thee out. When the prodigal did arise and go to his father, 'his father had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him,' Luke xv. 10. Though thou hast been a prodigal, and almost spent all upon thy lusts, yet, if thou wilt give a bill of divorce to thy sins, and flee to God by repentance, know that he hath the bowels of a father; he will embrace thee in the arms of his mercy, and seal thy pardon with a kiss. What tho' thy sins have been heinous? the wound is not so broad as the plaister of Christ's blood. The sea covers great rocks: the sea of God's compassion can drown thy great sins; therefore be not discouraged, go to God, resolve to cast thyself upon his fatherly bowels; God may be entreated of thee, as he was of him. Manassah, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.

*Use III. Of comfort.* To such as can upon good grounds call God Father. There's more sweetness in this word Father, than if we had ten thousand worlds. David thought it a great matter to be son-in-law to a king, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. 'What is my father's family, that I should be son-in-law to the king?' But what is it to be born of God, and have God for our Father?

*Qu. Wherein lies the happiness of having God for our Father?*

*Ans.* 1. If God be our Father, then he will teach us. What father will refuse to counsel his son? doth God command parents to instruct their children, Deut. iv. 10. and will not he instruct his? Isa. xlviii. 17. 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.' Psal. lxxi. 17. 'O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.' If God be our Father, he will give us the teachings of his Spirit; 'The natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man may have excellent notions in divinity, but God must teach us to know the mysteries of the gospel after

a spiritual manner. A man may see the figures upon a dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the sun shine : we may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly, till God, by his Spirit, shine upon our soul. God teacheth not only our ear, but our heart : he not only informs our mind, but inclines our will ; we never learn till God teach us. If God be our Father, he will teach us how to order our affairs with discretion, Ps. cxii. 5. How to carry ourselves wisely, 1 Sam. xviii. 5. 'David behaved himself wisely.' He will teach us what to answer when we are brought before governors ; he will put words into our mouths, Matth. x. 18, 19, 20. 'Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake : but take no thought how or what ye shall speak : for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.'

2. If God be our Father, then he hath bowels of affection towards us. If it be so unnatural for a father but to love his child, can we think God can be defective in his love ? All the affections of parents come from God, yet are but a spark from his flame. He is the Father of mercies, 2 Cor. i. 3. He begets all the mercies and bowels in the creature ; his love to his children, is a love which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 19. It exceeds all dimensions ; it is higher than heaven, it is broader than the sea. That you may see God's fatherly love to his children ; 1. Consider God makes a precious valuation of them, Isa. xliii. 4. 'Since thou wast precious in my sight.' A father prizeth his child above his jewels ; their names are precious, for they have God's own name written upon them, Rev. iii. 12. 'I will write upon him the name of my God.' Their prayers are a precious perfume ; their tears God's bottles, Ps. lvi. 8. God esteems his children as a crown of glory in his hands, Isa. lxxv. 3. (2.) God loves the places they were born in the better for their sakes, Ps. lxxxvii. 6. 'Of Zion it shall be said, This man was born there ;' this and that believer was born there : God loves the ground his children tread upon ; hence Judea, the seat of God's children and chosen, God calls a delightful land, Mal. iii. 12. It was not only pleasant for situation and fruitfulness, but because God's children, who were his *Hephzibah*, or delight, lived there. (3.) He chargeth the great ones of the world not to prejudice his children : their persons are sacred, Ps. cv. 14. 'He suffered no man to do them wrong : yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed.' By anointed, is meant the children of the high God, who have the unction of the Spirit, and are set apart for God. (4.) God delights in their company, he loves to see their countenance, and hear their voice, Cant. ii. 14. He cannot refrain long from their company ; let but two or

three of his children meet and pray together, he will be sure to be among them, Mat. xviii. 20. 'Where two or three are met together in my name, I am in the midst of them.' (5.) God bears his children in his bosom, as a nursing-father doth the sucking-child, Numb. xi. 12. Isa. xlvi. 4. 'To be carried in God's bosom, shews how near his children lie to his heart. (6.) God is full of solicitous care for them, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'He careth for you.' His eye is still upon them, they are never out of his thoughts. A father cannot always take care for his child, he sometimes is asleep; but God is a Father that never sleeps, Pl. cxxi. 4. 'He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.' (7.) He thinks nothing too good to part with to his children; he gives them the kidneys of the wheat, and honey out of the rock, and 'Wine on the lees well refined,' Isa. xxv. 6. He gives them three jewels more worth than heaven, the blood of his Son, the grace of his Spirit, the light of his countenance. Never was there such an indulgent, affectionate Father. (8.) If God hath one love better than another, he bestows it upon them: they have the cream and quintessence of his love; 'He will rejoice over thee, he will rest in his love,' Zeph. iii. 17. God loves his children with such a love as he loves Christ, John xvii. 26. It is the same love, for the unchangeableness of it; God will no more cease to love his adopted sons, than he will to love his natural Son.

3. If God be our Father, he will be full of sympathy, Pl. ciii. 13. 'As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Jer. xxxi. 20. 'Is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him.' God pities his children in two cases; (1.) In cases of infirmities. (2.) Injuries.

(1.) In case of infirmities. If the child be deformed or hath any bodily distemper, the father pities it: If God be our Father, he pities our weaknesses; and he so pities them as to heal them, Isa. lvii. 18. 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' As God hath bowels to pity, so he hath balsam to heal.

(2.) In case of injuries. Every blow of the child goes to the father's heart; when the saints suffer, God doth sympathize, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted.' He did, as it were, bleed in their wounds. 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' When the foot was trod on, the head cried out, Judges x. 19. 'God's soul was grieved for the children of Israel.' As when one string in a lute is touched, all the rest of the strings sound; when God's children are stricken, his bowels sound, Zech. ii. 8. 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye.'

4. If God be our Father, he will take notice of the least good he sees in us: if there be but a sigh for sin, God hears it, Pl. xxxviii. 9. 'My groaning is not hid from thee.' If there be

but a penitential tear comes out of our eye, God sees it, Isa. xxxviii. 5. 'I have seen thy tears.' If there be but a good intention, God takes notice, 1 Kings viii. 18. 'Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house to my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' God punisheth intentional wickedness, and crowns intentional goodness, 'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' God takes notice of the least *scintilla*, the least spark of grace in his children, 1 Pet. iii. 6. 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord : ' the Holy Ghost doth not mention Sarah's unbelief or laughing at the promise ; he puts a finger upon the scar, winks at her failing, and only takes notice of the good that was in her, her obedience to her husband ; ' she obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Nay, that good which the saints scarce take notice of in themselves, God in a special manner observes, Matth. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink.' 'Then shall the righteous say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee ?' They did as it were overlook and disclaim their own works of charity, yet Christ doth take notice, 'I was an hungred and ye fed me.' What comfort is this ! God spies the least good in his children ; he can see a grain of corn hid under chaff, grace hid under corruption.

5. If God be our Father, he will take all we do in good part. Those duties we ourselves censure, God will crown. When a child of God looks over his best duties, he sees so much sin cleaving to them, that he is even confounded ; Lord, saith he, there is more sulphur than incense in my prayers. But for your comfort, if God be our Father, he will crown those duties which you yourselves censure ; God sees there is sincerity in the hearts of his children, and this gold, (though light) shall have grains of allowance : though there may be defects in the services of God's children, yet God will not cast away their offering, 2 Chron. xxx. 20. 'The Lord healed the people.' The tribes of Israel being straitened in time, wanted some legal purifications ; yet, because their hearts were right God healed them ; he pardoned them. God accepts of the good will, 2 Cor. viii. 12. A father takes a letter from his son kindly, though there are blots or bad English in it. What blemishes are there in our heavenly things ; Yet our Father in heaven accepts ; saith God, it is my child and he will do better ; I will look upon him, through Christ, with a merciful eye.

6. If God be our Father, then he will correct us in measure, Jer. xxx. 11. 'I will correct thee in measure ;' And that two ways ; 1<sup>st</sup>, It shall be in measure, for the kind ; God will not lay upon us more than we are able to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13. He knows our frame, Ps. ciii. 14. He knows we are not steel or marble, therefore will deal gently, he will not over-afflict : as

the physician that knows the temper of the body, will not give physic too strong for the body : nor will he give one drachm or scruple too much. God hath not only the title of a father, but the bowels of a father ; he will not lay too heavy burdens on his children, lest their spirits fail before him. *2dly*, He will correct in measure for the duration ; he will not let the affliction lie on too long, Pf. cxxv. 3. ‘ The rod of the wicked, shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.’ It may be there, and not rest, Isa. lvii. 16. ‘ I will not contend for ever.’ Our heavenly Father will love for ever, but he will not contend for ever. The torments of the damned are for ever, Rev. xiv. 11. ‘ The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.’ The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but God’s children only taste of the cup of affliction, and their heavenly Father will say, *transeat calix*, ‘ let this cup pass away from them,’ Isa. xxxv. 10. A sting a wing.

7. If God be our Father, he will intermix mercy with all our afflictions : if he gives us wormwood to drink, he will mix it with honey. In the ark, the rod was laid up, and manna ; with our Father’s rod there is always some manna.’ ‘ Ather’s shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipt in oil,’ Gen. xxxiii. 24. Affliction is the shoe of brass that pincheth ; but there is mercy in the affliction, there is the foot dipt in oil. When God afflicts the body, he gives peace of conscience ; there is mercy in the affliction. An affliction comes to prevent falling into sin ; there is mercy in an affliction. Jacob had his thigh hurt in wrestling ; there was the affliction : but when he saw God’s face, and received a blessing from the angel, Gen. xxxii. 30. There was mercy in the affliction. In every cloud a child of God may see a rainbow of mercy shining. As the limner mixeth dark shadows and bright colours together ; so our heavenly Father mingles the dark and bright together, crosses and blessings ; and is not this a great happiness, for God thus to chequer his providences, and mingle goodness with severity ?

8. If God be our Father, the evil one shall not prevail against us. Satan is called the evil one, emphatically : he is the grand enemy of the saints : and that both in a military sense, as he fights against them with his temptations ; and in a forensical or law sense, as he is an accuser, and pleads against them ; yet neither way shall he prevail against God’s children. As for his shooting his fiery darts, God will bruise Satan shortly under the saint’s feet, Rom. xvi. 20. As for his accusing, Christ is advocate for the saints, and answers all bills of indictment brought in against them. God will make all Satan’s temptations promote the good of his children, *1st*, As they set them more praying, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Temptation is a medicine for security. *2dly*, As they are a means to humble them, 2 Cor. xii. 7. ‘ Lest



I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.' The thorn in the flesh was a temptation ; this thorn was to prick the bladder of pride. *3dly*, As they establish them more in grace : a tree shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted : the blowing of a temptation doth but settle a child of God more in grace. Thus the evil one, Satan, shall not prevail against the children of God.

9. If God be our Father, no real evil shall befall us, Ps. xci.

10. 'There shall no evil befall thee.' It is not said, no trouble : but, no evil : God's children are privileged persons ; they are privileged from the hurt of every thing, Luke x. 19. 'Nothing shall by any means hurt you.' The hurt and malignity of the affliction is taken away : affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it ; it makes him worse, Rev. xvi. 9. 'Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.' But no evil befalls a child of God, he is bettered by affliction, Heb. xii. 10. 'That ye may be made partakers of his holiness.' What hurt doth the furnace to the gold ? It only makes it purer : What hurt doth afflictions to grace ? Only refine and purify it. What a great privilege is this, to be freed, though not from the stroke of affliction, yet from the sting ! No evil shall touch a saint : when the dragon hath poisoned the water, they say, the unicorn with his horn doth draw out the poison : Christ hath drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice a child of God. Again, no evil befalls a child of God, because no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. 'No condemnation to them in Christ Jesus.' God doth not condemn them, nor conscience doth not condemn them. Both jury and judge acquit them ; then no evil befalls them, for nothing is really an evil but that which damns.

10. If God be our Father, this may make us go with cheerfulness to the throne of grace : were a man to petition his enemy, there were little hope : but when a child petitions his father, he may work with confidence to speed. The word father works upon God, it toucheth his very bowels. What can a father deny his child ? 'If a son ask bread will he give him a stone ?' Matth. vii. 9. This may embolden us to go to God for pardon of sin, and further degrees of sanctity. We pray to a Father of mercy, sitting upon a throne of grace, Luke xi. 13. 'If ye then being evil know to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him ?' This did quicken the church, and add wings to prayer, Isa. lxiii. 15. 'Look down from heaven.' ver. 16. 'Doubtless thou art our Father.' Who doth God keep his mercies for, but his children ? Three things may cause boldness in prayer : we have a Father to pray to, and the Spirit to help us to pray, and an Advocate to present our prayers. God's

children should in all their troubles, run to their heavenly Father, as that sick child, 2 Kings iv. 19. 'He said unto his father, my head my head.' So pour out thy complaint to God in prayer, 'Father, my heart my heart: my dead heart, quicken it; my hard heart, soften it in Christ's blood. Father, my heart, my heart.' Sure God, that hears the cry of the ravens, will hear the cry of his children.

11. If God be our Father, he will stand between us and danger; a father will keep off danger from his child. God calls himself *Scutum*, a shield; a shield defends the head, guards the vitals; God shields off danger from his children, Acts xviii. 10. 'I am with thee, and none shall set on thee to hurt thee.' God is an hiding-place, Ps. xxvii. 5. God preserved Athanasius strangely; he put it into his mind to depart out of the house he was in, the night before the enemy came to search for him. As God hath a breast to feed, so he hath wings to cover his children, Ps. xci. 4. 'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.' God appoints his holy angels to be a life-guard about his children,' Heb. i. 14. Never was any prince so well guarded as a believer. The angels, 1st, Are a numerous guard, 2 Kings vi. 17. 'The mountain was full of horses of fire round about Elisha.' The horses and chariots of fire were the angels of God, to defend the prophet Elisha. 2dly, A strong guard; one angel, in a night, slew an hundred and fourscore and five thousand, 2 Kings xix. 32. If one angel slew so many, what would an army of angels have done? 3dly, The angels are a swift guard; they are ready in an instant to help God's children: therefore they are described with wings, to shew their swiftness; they fly to our help, Dan. ix. 21, 23. 'At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to thee?' Here was a swift motion for the angel to come from heaven to earth between the beginning and ending of Daniel's prayer. 4thly, The angels are a watchful guard; not like Saul's guard, asleep when their lord was in danger, 1 Sam. xxvi. 12. The angels are a vigilant guard, they watch over God's children to defend them, Psal. xxxiv. 7. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.' There is an invisible guardianship of angels about God's children.

12. If God be our Father, we shall not want any thing that he sees is good for us, Psal. xxxiv. 10. 'They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' God is pleased sometimes to keep his children to hard commons, but it is good for them: sheep thrive best on short pasture; God sees too much may not be good: plenty breeds surfeit. *Luxuriant animi rebus secundis*. God sees it good sometimes to diet his children, and keep them short, that they may run the heavenly race the bet-

ter : it was good for Jacob there was a famine in the land : it was a means to bring him to his son Joseph : so it is that God's children sometimes see the world's emptiness, that they may acquaint themselves more with Christ's fulness. If God see it be good for them to have more of the world they shall have it : God will not let them want any good thing.

13. If God be our Father, all the promises of the Bible belong to us : God's children are called ' heirs of the promise,' Heb. vi. 17. A wicked man can lay claim to nothing in the Bible but the curses ; he hath no more to do absolutely with the promises, than a plowman hath to do with the city charter : the promises are children's bread : the promises are *mulctralia Evangelii*, the breasts of the gospel milking out consolations ; and who are to suck of these breasts but God's children ? The promise of pardon is for them, Jer. xxiii. 8. ' I will pardon all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me.' The promise of healing is for them, Isa. lvii. 18. The promise of salvation, Jer. xxiii. 6. The promises are supports of faith : they are God's sealed deed ; they are a Christian's cordial. O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the limbec of the promises ! St. Chrysostom compares the scriptures to a garden, the promises are the fruit trees that grow in this garden : a child of God may go to any promise in the Bible, and pluck comfort from it : he is an heir of the promise.

14. God makes all his children conquerors : 1. They conquer themselves ; *fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincit maenia*. The saints conquer their own lusts ; ' they bind these princes in fetters of iron,' Ps. cxlix. 8. Though the children of God may sometimes be foiled, and lose a single battle, yet not the victory. 2. They conquer the world : The world holds forth her two breasts of profit and pleasure, and many are overcome by it ; but the children of God have a world-conquering faith, 1 John v. 4. ' This is the victory over the world, even your faith.' 3. They conquer their enemies ; how can that be, when they oft take away their lives ? 1. They conquer, by not complying with them : the three children would not fall down to the golden image, Dan. iii. 18. They would rather burn than bow ; here they were conquerors. He who complies with another's lust, is a captive ; he who refuseth to comply is a conqueror.

(2.) God's children conquer their enemies by heroic patience. A patient Christian, like the anvil, bears all strokes invincibly : thus the martyrs overcame their enemies by patience. Nay, ' God's children are more than conquerors.' Rom. viii. 37. ' We are more than conquerors.' How are God's children more than conquerors ? Because they conquer without loss, and because they are crowned after death which other conquerors are not.

15. If God be our Father he will now and then send us some tokens of his love. God's children live far from home, and meet sometimes with coarse usage from the unkind world; therefore God, to encourage his children, sends them sometimes tokens and pledges of his love: What are these? He gives them a return of prayer, there is a token of love; he quickens and enlargeth their hearts in duty, there is a token of love; he gives them the first fruits of his Spirit which are love tokens, Rom. viii. 23. As God gives the wicked the first fruits of hell, horror of conscience and despair: so he gives his children the first fruits of his Spirit, joy and peace, which are foretastes of glory; some of God's children having received these tokens of love from their heavenly Father, have been so transported, that they have died for joy, as the glass oft breaks with the strength of the wine put into it.

16. If God be our Father, he will indulge and spare us, Mal. iii. 17. 'I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' God's sparing his children, imports this, his clemency towards them; he doth not punish them as he might, Ps. ciii. 10. 'He hath not dealt with us according to our sins.' We oft do that which merits wrath, grieve God's Spirit, relapse into sin; God passeth by much, and spares us; God did not spare his natural Son, Rom. viii. 32. Yet he will spare his adopted sons; God threatened Ephraim, to make him as the chaff driven with the whirlwind, but he soon repented, Hos. xiii. 4. 'Yet I am the Lord thy God,' ver. 10. 'I will be thy king.' Here God spared him, as a father spares his son. Israel oft provoked God with their complaints, but God used clemency toward them, he oft answered their murmurings with mercies; here he spared them as a father spares his son.

17. If God be our Father, he will put honour and renown upon us at the last day. 1. He will clear the innocence of his children. God's children in this life are strangely misrepresented to the world? They are loaded with invectives, they are called factious, seditious: Elijah, the troubler of Israel: Luther was called the trumpet of rebellion; Athanasius was accused to the emperor Constantine, to be the raiser of tumults; the primitive Christians were accused to be *infanticidii incestue rei*, killers of their children, guilty of incest; as Tertullian, reported St. Paul to be a petulant person, Acts xxiv. 4. Famous Wickliff, called the idol of the heretics, and that he died drunk. If Satan cannot defile God's children, he will disgrace them; if he cannot strike his fiery darts into their conscience, he will put a dead fly into their name: but God will one day clear his children's innocence, he will roll away their reproach; as God will make a resurrection of bodies, so of names, Isa. xxv. 8. 'The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the re-

buke of his people shall he take away.' God will be the saints' compurgator, Pf. xxxvii. 6. 'He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.' The night casts its dark mantle upon the most beautiful flowers; but the light comes in the morning and dispels the darkness, and every flower appears in its orient brightness. So the wicked may by misreports darken the honour and repute of the saints: but God will dispel this darkness, and cause their names to shine forth: 'He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.' As God did stand up for the honour of Moses, when Aaron and Miriam went about to eclipse his fame, Numb. xii. 8. 'Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' So will God say one day to the wicked, wherefore were ye not afraid to defame and traduce my children? They having my image upon them, how durst ye abuse my picture? At last God's children shall come forth out of all their calumnies, as a 'dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,' Pf. lxxviii. 13. 2. God will make an open and honourable recital of all their good deeds: as the sins of the wicked shall be openly mentioned, to their eternal infamy and confusion; so all the good deeds of the saints shall be openly mentioned, 'and then shall every man have praise of God, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Every prayer made with melting eyes, every good service, every work of charity, shall be openly declared before men and angels, Matth. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me.' Thus God will set a trophy of honour upon all his children at the last day; 'then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father,' Matth. xiii. 43.

18. If God be our Father, he will settle good land of inheritance upon us, 1 Pet. i. 4. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.' A father may be fallen to decay, and have nothing to leave his son but his blessing; but God will settle an inheritance on his children, and an inheritance no less than a kingdom, Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' This kingdom is more glorious and magnificent than any earthly kingdom; it is set out by pearls and precious stones, the richest jewels, Rev. xii. 19. What are all the rarities of the world to this kingdom? the coasts of pearl, the islands of spices, the rocks of diamonds? In this heavenly kingdom is that which is satisfying, unparalleled beauty, rivers of pleasure, and this for ever, Pf. xvi. 11. 'At thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.' Heaven's eminency is its permanency; and this kingdom God's children shall enter into immediately after death: there is a sudden transition and passage from death to glory,

2 Cor. v. 9. 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' God's children shall not stay long for their inheritance; it is but twinkling, and they shall see God. How may this comfort God's children, who perhaps are low in the world? Your Father in heaven, will settle a kingdom upon you at death, such a kingdom as eye hath not seen; he will give you a crown not of gold, but glory: he will give you white robes lined with immortality. 'It is your Father's good pleasure, to give you a kingdom.'

19. If God be our Father, it is comfort, 1. In case of loss of relations: hast thou lost a father? Yet, if thou art a believer, thou art no orphan, thou hast an heavenly Father, a father that never dies, 1 Tim. vi. 16. 'Who only hath immortality.' 2. It is comfort, in case of death; God is thy Father, and at death thou art going to thy Father: well might Paul say 'death is yours,' 1 Cor. iii. 2. It is your friend, that will carry you home to your father. How glad are children when they are going home? This was Christ's comfort at death, he was going to his Father, John xvi. 28. 'I leave the world, and go to the Father.' And, John xx. 17. 'I ascend to my Father.' If God be our Father, we may with comfort at the day of death, resign our souls into his hand: so did Christ, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.' If a child hath any jewel, he will, in time of danger, put it into his father's hands, where he thinks it will be kept most safe: our soul is our richest jewel; we may at death resign our souls into God's hands, where they will be safer than in our own keeping; 'Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.' What a comfort is this, death carries a believer to his Father's house, 'where are delights unspeakable and full of glory!' How glad was old Jacob, when he saw the waggons and chariots to carry him to his son Joseph? The text saith, 'His spirit revived,' Gen. xlv. 27. Death is a triumphant chariot, to carry every child of God to his father's mansion-house.

20. If God be our Father, he will not disinherit his children; God may for a time desert them, but not disinherit them. The sons of kings have sometimes been disinherited by the cruelty of usurpers: as, Alexander the Great, his son was put by his just right, by the violence and ambition of his father's captains: but what power on earth shall hinder the heirs of the promise from their inheritance; men cannot, and God will not cut off the entail. The Arminians hold falling away from grace, and so a child of God may be defeated of his inheritance: but I shall shew that God's children can never be degraded nor disinherited, their heavenly Father will not cast them off from being children. 1. It is evident God's children cannot be finally disinherited, by virtue of the eternal decree of heaven. God's de-

decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depend; God's decree ties the knot of adoption so fast that neither sin, death nor hell, can break it asunder, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called,' &c. Predestination is nothing else but God's decreeing a certain number to be heirs of glory, on whom he will settle the crown; whom he predestinates, he glorifies. What shall hinder God's electing love, or make his decree null and void? 2. Besides God's decree, he hath engaged himself by promise, that the heirs of heaven shall never be put by their inheritance. God's promises are not like blanks in a lottery, but as a sealed deed which cannot be reversed: the promises are the saints' royal charter; and this is one promise, that their heavenly Father will not disinherit them, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' God's fidelity, which is the richest pearl of his crown, is engaged in this promise for his children's perseverance; 'I will not turn away from them.' A child of God cannot fall away, while he is held fast in these two arms of God, his love, and his faithfulness. 3. Jesus Christ undertakes, that all God's children by adoption shall be preserved, in a state of grace, till they inherit glory: as the heathens feigned of Atlas, that he did bear up the heavens from falling; Jesus Christ is that blessed Atlas, that bears up the saints from falling away.

Qu. *How doth Christ preserve the saints' graces, till they come to heaven?*

Ans. 1. *Influxu Spiritus.* Christ carries on grace in the souls of the elect, by the influence and co-operation of his Spirit: Christ doth, *Spiritu*, continually excite and quicken grace in the godly: his Spirit doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy flame; *Spiritus est vicarius Christi*; the Spirit is Christ's vicar on earth, his proxy, his executor, to see that all that Christ hath purchased for the saints be made good: Christ hath obtained an inheritance incorruptible for them, 1 Pet. i. 4. and the Spirit of Christ is his executor, to see that this inheritance be settled upon them. 2. Christ carries on perseveringly in the souls of the elect, *vi orationis*, by the prevalency of his intercession, Heb. vii. 25. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Christ prays that every saint may hold out in grace till he comes to heaven; can the children of such prayers perish? If the heirs of heaven should be disinherited, and fall short of glory, then God's decree must be reversed, his promise broken, Christ's prayer frustrated, which were blasphemy to imagine. 4. That God's children cannot be disinherited, or put by their right to the crown of heaven, is evident from their mystical union with Christ. Believers are incorporated into

Christ, they are knit to Christ, as the members to the head, by the nerves and ligaments of faith, so that they cannot be broken off, Eph. i. 22, 23. 'The church which is his body.' What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical, 'A bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, that they should never, by the power of death or hell, be separated. Christ and his spiritual members make one Christ: now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ want any member of his body mystical, and be perfect? Every member is an ornament to the body, and adds to the honour of it: how can Christ part with any mystical member, and not part with some of his glory too? So that by all this it is evident, that God's children must needs persevere in grace, and cannot be disinherited. If they could be disinherited, then the scripture could not be fulfilled, which tells us of glorious rewards for the heirs of promise, Psal. lviii. 11. 'Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous.' Now, if God's adopted children should fall away finally from grace, and miss of heaven, what reward were there for the righteous? and Moses did indiscreetly to look for the recompence of the reward, and so there would be a door opened to despair.

*Obj. This doctrine of God's children persevering, and having the heavenly inheritance settled on them, may cause carnal security, and make them less circumspect in their walking.*

*Ans.* Corrupt nature may, as the spider, suck poison from this flower; but a sober Christian, who hath felt the efficacy of grace upon his heart, dares not abuse this doctrine: he knows perseverance is attained in the use of means, therefore he walks holily, that so in the use of means he may arrive at perseverance. St. Paul knew that he should not be disinherited, and that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ: but who more holy and watchful than he? 1 Cor. ix. 27. 'I keep under my body;' and, Phil. iii. 14. 'I press towards the mark.' God's children have that holy fear in them, which keeps them from security and wantonness; they believe the promise, therefore they rejoice in hope; they fear their hearts, therefore they watch and pray. Thus you see what strong consolation there is for all the heirs of the promise. Such as have God for their Father are the happiest persons on earth; they are in such a condition that nothing can hurt them; they have their Father's blessing, all things conspire for their good; they have a kingdom settled on them, and the entail can never be cut off. How may God's children be comforted in all conditions, let the times be what they will? their Father is in heaven, he rules all: if troubles arise, they shall but carry God's children so much the sooner to



their Father. The more violently the wind beats against the sails of a ship, the sooner the ship is brought to the haven; and the more fiercely God's children are assaulted, the sooner they come to their Father's house, 1 Thess. iv. 18. 'Wherefore comfort one another with these words.'

*Use 4. Of exhortation.* Let us behave and carry ourselves as the children of such a Father, in several particulars.

1. Let us depend upon our heavenly Father in all our straits and exigencies: let us believe that he will provide for us. Children rely upon their parents for the supply of wants: if we trust God for salvation, shall we not trust him for a livelihood! There is a lawful provident care to be used, but beware of a distrustful care, Luke xii. 24. 'Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, and God feedeth them.' Doth God feed the birds of the air, and will he not feed his children? Ver. 27. 'Consider the lilies how they grow; they spin not: yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' Doth God clothe the lilies, and will he not clothe his lambs? Even the wicked taste of God's bounty, Psal. lxxiv. 7. 'Their eyes stand out with fatness.' Doth God feed his slaves, and will not he feed his family? God's children may not have so liberal a share in the things of this life, but little meal in the barrel; they may be drawn low, but not drawn dry; they shall have so much as God sees is good for them, Psal. xxxiv. 10. 'They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' If God gives them not *ad voluntatem*, he will *ad sanitatem*; if he gives them not always what they crave, he will give them what they need; if he gives them not a feast, he will give them a *viaticum*, a bait by the way: let God's children therefore depend upon God's fatherly providence; give not way to distrustful thoughts, distracting cares, or indirect means; God can provide for you without your sins, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' An earthly parent may have affection for his child, and would provide for him, but sometimes he is not able; but God can create a supply for his children; yea, he hath promised a supply, Psalm xxxvii. 3. 'Verily thou shalt be fed.' Will God give his children heaven, and will he not give them enough to bear their charges thither? Will he give them a kingdom, and deny them daily bread? O depend upon your heavenly Father; he hath said, 'He will never leave you, nor forsake you,' Heb. xiii. 5.

2. If God be our Father, let us imitate him: the child doth not only bear his father's image, but doth imitate him in his speech, gesture, behaviour: if God be our Father, let us imitate him, Eph. v. 4. 'Be ye followers of God as dear children.'

1. Imitate God in forgiving injuries, Isa. xlv. 23. 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.' As the sun scat-

ters not only thin mists, but thick clouds, so God pardons great offences ; imitate God in this, Eph. iv. 32. ‘ Forgiving one another.’—Cranmer was a man of a forgiving spirit, he did bury injuries, and requite good for evil ; he who hath God for his Father, hath God for his pattern. 2. Imitate God in works of mercy ; He looseth the prisoners, Psal. cxlvi. 7. ‘ He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,’ Psal. cxlv. 16. He drops his sweet dew as well upon the thistle as the rose ; Imitate God in works of mercy ; relieve the wants of others, be rich in Good works, Luke vi. 36. ‘ Be merciful as your Father also is merciful.’ Be not so hard-hearted, as to shut the poor out of the lines of communication. Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water.

3. If God be our Father, let us submit patiently to his will : if he lay his strokes on us, they are the corrections of a Father, not the punishments of a judge ; this made Christ so patient, John xviii. 11. ‘ Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me ?’ He sees we need affliction, 1 Pet. i. 6. he appoints it as a diet-drink to purge and sanctify us, Isa. xxvii. 9. therefore dispute not but submit, Heb. xii. 9. ‘ We had fathers of the flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ;’ they might correct out of an humour but God doth it for our profit, Heb. xii. 10. ‘ Therefore say, as Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good.’ What gets the child by struggling, but more blows ? What got Israel by their murmuring and rebellion, but a longer and more tedious march, and at last their carcases fell in the wilderness.

4. If God be our Father, let this cause in us a child-like reverence, Mal. i. 6. ‘ If I be a Father, where is my honour ?’ This is a part of the honour we give to God, when we reverence and adore him : if you have not always a child-like confidence, yet always preserve a child-like reverence. And how ready are we to run into extremes, either to despond or grow wanton ? Because God is a Father, therefore do not think you may be secure and take liberty to sin ; if you do, God may carry it so as if he were no Father ; he may throw hell into your conscience. When David presumed upon God’s paternal affection, and began to wax wanton under mercy, God made him pay dear for it, he withdrew the sense of his love ; and though he had the heart of a Father, yet he had the look of an enemy. David prayed, ‘ Cause me to hear the voice of joy.’ Psal. li. 8. He lay several months in desertion, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. Oh keep alive holy fear ; with a child-like confidence, preserve an humble reverence : the Lord is a Father, therefore love to serve him ; he is the mighty God, therefore fear to offend him.

5. If God be our Father, let us walk obedientially, 1 Pet. i. 14. 'As obedient children.' When God bids you be humble and self-denying, deny yours, part with your bosom-sin : be sober in your attire, favoury in your speeches, grave in your deportment, obey your Father's voice ; open to God, as the flower opens to the sun : as you expect your Father's blessing, obey him in whatever he commands, first and second table duties. A lutanist, that he may make sweet music, toucheth upon every string of the lute ; the ten commandments are like a ten-stringed instrument, touch upon every string, obey every commandment, or you cannot make sweet melody in religion. Obey your heavenly Father, though he commands things contrary to flesh and blood. 1. When he commands to mortify sin, that sin which hath been dear to you : pluck out this right eye, that you may see the better to go to heaven. 2. When he commands you to suffer for him, be ready to obey, Acts xxi. 13. Every good Christian hath a spirit of martyrdom in him, and is ready rather to suffer for the truth, than the truth should suffer. Luther said, he had rather be a martyr, than a monarch, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, as Eusebius. Ignatius called his chains, his spiritual pearls, and did wear his fetters as a bracelet of diamonds. This is to carry it as God's children, when we obey his voice, and count not our lives dear, so that we may shew our love to our heavenly Father, Rev. xii. 11. 'They loved not their lives to the death.'

6. If God be your Father, shew it by your cheerful looks that you are the children of such a Father. Too much drooping and despondency disparageth the relation you stand in to God. What though you meet with hard usage in the world ? You are now in a strange land, far from home ; it will be shortly better with you, when you are in your own country, and your Father hath you in his arms. Doth not the heir rejoice in hope ? shall the sons of a king walk dejected ? 2 Sam. xiii. 4. 'Why art thou, being the king's son, lean ?' is God an unkind Father ? are his commands grievous ? hath he no land to give to his heirs ? Why then do God's children walk so sad ? Never had children such privileges as they who are of the seed-royal of heaven, and have God for their Father ; they should rejoice therefore, who are within a few hours to be crowned with glory.

7. If God be our Father, let us honour him by walking very holily, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' A young prince asking a philosopher how he should behave himself, the philosopher said, *Memento te filium esse regis*—Remember thou art a king's son : do nothing but what becomes the son of a king : so remember you are the adopted sons and daughters of the high God, do nothing unworthy of such a relation. A debauched child is the disgrace of his father. Is this thy son's

coat ? said they to Jacob, when they brought it home dipped in blood, Gen. xxxviii. 32. so when we see a person defiled with malice, passion, drunkenness, we may say, is this the coat of God's adopted son ? doth he look as an heir of glory ? It is a blaspheming the name of God, to call him Father, yet live in sin. Such as profess God is their Father, yet live unholily, they will slander and defraud ; these are as bad to God as heathens, Amos ix. 7. - ' Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord ? ' The Ethiopians were uncircumcised, a base, ill-bred people ; when Israel grew wicked, they were no better to God than Ethiopians. Loose scandalous livers under the gospel are no better in God's esteem than Pagans and Americans ; nay, they shall have an hotter place in hell. O let all who profess God to be their Father, honour him by their unspotted lives. Scipio abhorred the embraces of an harlot, because he was the general of an army : abstain from all sin, because you are born of God, and have God for your Father, 1 Thess. v. 21. ' Abstain from all appearance of evil.' It was a saying of Augustus, an emperor should not only be free from crimes, but from the suspicion of them. By an holy life you would bring glory to your heavenly Father, and cause others to become his children : *Est pallax virtutis odor*. Causinus in his hieroglyphics speaks of a dove, whose wings being perfumed with sweet ointments, did draw the other doves after her ; the holy lives of God's children is a sweet perfume to draw others to religion, and make them to be of the family of God. Justin Martyr saith, " That which converted him to Christianity, was the beholding the blameless lives of the Christians."

8. If God be our Father, let us love all that are his children, Pf. cxxxiii. 1. ' How pleasant is it for brethren to dwell together in unity ? ' it is compared to ointment, ver. 2. for the sweet fragrancy of it, 1 Pet. ii. 17. ' Love the brotherhood.' *Idem est motus animae in imaginem et rem*. The saints are the walking pictures of God : if God be our Father, we love to see his picture of holiness in believers ; we pity them for their infirmities, but love them for their graces ? we prize their company above others, Pf. cxix. 63. It may justly be suspected that God is not their Father, who love not God's children ; though they retain the ' communion of saints ' in their creed, yet they banish the communion of saints out of their company.

9. If God be our Father, let us shew heavenly mindedness : they who are born of God, do set their affections on things that are above, Col. iii. 2. O ye children of the high God ! do not disgrace your high birth by sordid covetousness. What, a son of God, and a slave to the world ! what sprung from heaven, and buried in the earth ! For a Christian, who pretends to de-

rive his pedigree from heaven, yet wholly to mind earthly things, is to debase himself : as if a king should leave his throne to follow the plough, Jer. xlv. 5. ' Seekest thou great things for thyself ? ' As if the Lord had said, ' What thou Barak, thou who art born of God, a-kin to angels, and by thy office a Levite, dost thou debase thyself, and spot the silver wings of thy grace, by belining them with earth ? Seekest thou great things ? Seek them not. ' The earth chokes the fire : earthliness chokes the fire of good affections.

10. *ult.* If God be our Father, let us own our heavenly Father in the worst times ; stand up in his cause, defend his truths. Athanasius owned God, when most of the world turned Arians. If sufferings come, do not deny God : he is a bad son, who denies his father. Such as are ashamed of God in times of danger, God will be ashamed to own them for his children, Mark viii. 38. ' Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels. ' So I have done with the first part of the preface, ' Our Father. '

II. The second part of the preface (which I shall briefly touch on) is, ' Which art in heaven. ' God is said to be in heaven, not that he is so included there, that he is no where else ; for the ' heaven of heavens cannot contain him, ' 1 Kings viii. 27. But, the meaning is, God is chiefly resident in the empyrean heaven, which the apostle calls ' the third heaven, ' 2 Cor. xii. 2. there God doth most give forth glory to his saints and angels.

Qu. *What may we learn from this, that God is in heaven ?*

Ans. 1. Hence we learn that we are to raise our minds in prayer above the earth. God is no where to be spoken with, but in heaven. God never denied that soul his suit, who went as far as heaven to ask it.

2. We learn from God's being in heaven, his sovereign power. *Hoc vocabulo intelligitur omnia subesse ejus imperio*, Calvin. Psal. cxv. 3. ' Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatever he pleased. ' God being in heaven governs the universe, and orders all occurrences here below for the good of his children : when the saints are in straits and dangers, and see no way of relief, he can send from heaven, and help them, Ps. lvii. 3. ' He shall send from heaven, and save me. '

3. We learn God's glory and majesty : he is in heaven ; therefore ' he is covered with light, ' Psal. civ. 2. ' Clothed with honour, ' Psal. civ. 1. and is as far above all worldly princes, as heaven is above earth.

4. We learn, from God's being in heaven, his omniscience ; ' All things are naked, and unmasked in his eye, ' Heb. iv. 13.

Men plot and contrive against the church ; but God is in heaven, and they do nothing but what our Father sees. If a man were on the top of a tower or theatre, he might thence see all the people below : God is in heaven, as in an high tower or theatre, and he sees all the transactions of men. The wicked make wounds in the backs of the righteous, and then pour in vinegar ; God writes down their cruelty, Exod. iii. 7. ‘ I have seen the afflictions of my people.’ God is in heaven, and he can thunder out of heaven upon his enemies, Psal. xviii. 13. ‘ The Lord thundered in the heavens ; yea, he sent out arrows, and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.’

5. We learn, from God’s being in heaven, comfort for the children of God ; when they pray to their Father, the way to heaven cannot be blocked up. One may have a father living in foreign parts, but the way, both by sea and by land, may be so blocked up, that there is no coming to him : but thou faint of God, when thou prayest to thy Father, he is in heaven ; and though thou art never so confined, thou mayest have access to him. A prison cannot keep thee from thy God : the way to heaven can never be blocked up.

So I have done with the word Father : I shall next speak of the pronoun, ‘ Our Father.’ In the first there is an appellation, Father ; in the second, an appropriation, ‘ Our Father.’ Christ, by this word (Our), would teach us thus much ; ‘ That in all our prayers to God, we should act faith.’ Our Father ; Father, denotes reverence ; Our Father, denotes faith. In all our prayers to God, we should exercise faith, ‘ Our Father.’ Faith is that which baptiseth prayer, and gives it a name ; it is called the ‘ prayer of faith,’ James v. 15. Without faith it is speaking, not praying. Faith is the breath of prayer ; prayer is dead, unless faith breathe in it. Faith is a necessary requisite in prayer. The oil of the sanctuary was made up of several sweet spices, ‘ pure myrrh, cassia, cinnamon,’ Exod. xxx. 23. Faith is the chief spice, or ingredient into prayer, which makes it go up to the Lord, as sweet incense, Jam. i. 6. ‘ Let him ask in faith,’ Mat. xxi. 22. ‘ Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.’ *Invoco te, Domine, quanquam languida et imbecilla fide, tamen fide ;* ‘ Lord, (said St. Cruxiger) I pray, though with a weak faith, yet with faith.’ Prayer is the gun we shoot with, fervency is the fire that dischargeth it, and faith is the bullet which pierceth the throne of grace : prayer is the key of heaven, faith is the hand that turns it ; ‘ pray in faith,’ ‘ Our Father.’ Faith must take prayer by the hand, or there is no coming nigh to God ; prayer without faith is unsuccessful. If a poor handy-craftsman, that lives by his labour, hath spoiled his tools, that he cannot work, how

shall he subsist? Prayer is the tool we work with, which procures all good for us: but unbelief spoils and blunts our prayers, and then we can get no blessing from God: a prayer that is faithless is fruitless. As Joseph said, 'You shall not see my face, unless you bring your brother Benjamin with you,' Gen. xlii. 3. So prayer cannot see God's face, unless it bring its brother faith with it. What is said of Israel, 'They could not enter in because of unbelief,' Heb. iii. 19. is as true of prayer, it cannot enter into heaven because of unbelief. This makes prayer often suffer shipwreck, because it dasheth upon the rock of unbelief. O sprinkle faith in prayer. We must say, 'Our Father.'

Qu. 1. *What doth praying in faith imply?*

Ans. Praying in faith implies the having of faith; the act implies the habit. To walk implies a principle of life; so to pray in faith implies an habit of grace. None can pray in faith but believers.

Qu. 2. *What is it to pray in faith?*

Ans. 1. To pray in faith, is to pray for that which God hath promised; where there is no promise, we cannot pray in faith.

2. To pray in faith, is to pray in Christ's meritorious name, John xiv. 13. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.' To pray in Christ's name, is to pray in the hope of confidence of Christ's merit. When we present Christ to God in prayer; when we carry the Lamb slain in our arms; when we say "Lord, we are sinners, but here is our surety: for Christ's sake be propitious:" this is coming to God in Christ's name; and this is to pray in faith.

3. To pray in faith is, in prayer to fix our faith on God's faithfulness, believing that he doth hear, and will help; this is a taking hold of God, Isa. lxiv. 7. By prayer we draw nigh to God, by faith we take hold of him, 2 Chron. xiii. 14. 'The children of Judah cried unto the Lord;' and this was the crying of faith, ver. 18. 'They prevailed, because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers.' Making supplication to God, and staying the soul on God, is praying in faith. To pray, and not rely on him for the granting our petitions, *irresio Dei est*, faith Pelican; "it is to abuse and put a scorn on God." By praying, we seem to honour God, by not believing we affront him. In prayer we say, Almighty, merciful Father; by not believing, we blot out all his titles again.

Qu. 3. *How may we know that we do truly pray in faith? We may say, 'Our Father,' and think we pray in faith, when it is in presumption; how therefore may we know that we do indeed pray in faith?*

Ans. 1. When our faith in prayer is humble: a presumptuous person hopes to be heard in prayer, for some inherent worthi-

ness in himself; he is so qualified, and hath done God good service, therefore he is confident God will hear his prayer: see an instance, Luke xviii. 11, 12. ‘The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust: I fast twice in the week; I give tythes of all I possess.’ This was a presumptuous prayer; but a sincere heart doth as well act humility in prayer as faith, Luke xviii. 13. ‘The publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.’ ‘God be merciful,’ there was faith; ‘to me a sinner,’ there was humility and a sense of unworthiness.

2. We may know we pray in faith, when though we have not the present thing we pray for, yet we believe God will grant, therefore we will stay his leisure. A Christian having a command to pray, and a promise, he is resolved to follow God with prayer, and not give over: as Peter, he knocked, yet the door was not opened; but he continued knocking, and at last it was opened, Acts xii. 16. So a Christian prays and prays, but hath no answer; but he will continue knocking at heaven’s door, knowing an answer will come, Psal. lxxxvi. 7. ‘Thou wilt answer me.’ Here is one that prays in faith. Christ saith, ‘Pray and faint not,’ Luke xviii. 1. A believer, at Christ’s word, lets down the net of prayer, and though he catch nothing, he will cast the net of prayer again, believing that mercy will come. Patience in prayer is nothing but faith spun out.

*Use I.* It reproves them that pray in formality, not in faith; they question whether God hears or will grant, James iv. 3. ‘Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.’ He doth not say, ye ask that which is unlawful; but, ye ask amiss, and therefore they receive not. Unbelief clips the wings of prayer, that it will not fly to the throne of grace; the rubbish of unbelief stops the current of prayer.

*Use II.* Of exhortation. Let us set faith a-work in prayer, [Our Father.] The husbandman sows in hope: prayer is the seed we sow; when the hand of faith scatters this seed, it brings forth a fruitful crop of blessing, prayer is the ship we send out to heaven; when faith makes an adventure in this ship, it brings home large returns of mercy. O pray in faith, say, ‘Our Father.’ And that we may act faith in prayer, consider,

(1.) God’s readiness to hear prayer. *Deus paratus ad vota exaudienda*, Calvin. Did God forbid all addresses to him, it would put a damp upon the trade of prayer; but God’s ear is open to prayer. It is one of the names by which God is known, Psal. xlv. 2. ‘O thou that hearest prayer.’ The Aediles among the Romans had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them. God is



both ready to hear, and grant prayer: this may encourage faith in prayer, And, whereas some may say, they have prayed, but have had no answer. 1. God may hear prayer, though he do not presently answer: we write a letter to a friend, he may have received it, though we have yet had no answer of it. Perhaps thou prayest for the light of God's face; God may lend thee an ear, though he doth not shew thee his face: 2. God may give an answer to prayer, when we do not perceive it. His giving an heart to pray, and inflaming the affections in prayer, is an answer of prayer, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. 'In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' David's inward strength was an answer of prayer, therefore let God's readiness to hear prayer encourage faith in prayer.

2. That we may act faith in prayer, consider, we do not pray alone; Christ prays over our prayers again; Christ's prayer is the ground why our prayer is heard. Christ takes the dross out of our prayer, and presents nothing to his Father but pure gold. Christ mingles his sweet odours with the prayers of the saints, Rev. v. 8. Think of the dignity of his person, he is God; and the sweetness of his relation, he is a son. O what encouragement is here, to pray in faith? Our prayers are put into the hand of a Mediator. Christ's prayer is mighty and powerful.

3. We pray to God for nothing but what is pleasing to him, and he hath a mind to grant: if a son ask nothing but what his father is willing to bestow, this may make him go to him with confidence. When we pray to God for holy hearts, there is nothing more pleasing to him. 1 Theff. iv. 3. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification,' We pray that God would give us an heart to love him, and there is nothing he more desires than our love. How may this make us pray in faith, when we pray for nothing but what is acceptable to God, and which he delights to bestow!

4. To encourage faith in prayer, consider the many sweet promises that God hath made to prayer. The cork keeps the net from sinking; the promises are the cork to keep faith from sinking in prayer. God hath bound himself to us by his promises: the Bible is bespangled with promises made to prayer, Isa. xxx. 19. 'He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry. The Lord is rich unto all that call upon him.' Rom. x. 12. Jer. xxix. 13. 'Then shall he find me when ye search for me with all your heart,' Psal. xlv. 14. 'He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.' The Tyrians tied their god Hercules with a golden chain that he should not remove: God hath tied himself fast to us by his promises: How should these ani-

mate and spirit faith in prayer? Faith gets strength in prayer, by sucking from the breast of a promise.

5. That we may act faith in prayer, consider, Jesus Christ hath purchased that which we pray for; we may think the things we ask for in prayer too great for us to obtain, but they are not too great for Christ to purchase; we pray for pardon, Christ hath purchased it in his blood; we pray for the Spirit to animate and inspire us, the sending down of the Holy Ghost into our hearts is the fruit of Christ's death, John xvi. This may put life into our prayers, and make us pray in faith; because the things we ask in prayer, though they are more than we deserve, yet not more than Christ hath purchased for us.

6. To make us pray in faith, consider there is such a bountifulness in God, that he often exceeds the prayers of his people; he gives them more than they ask! as Hannah asked a son, and God gave her not only a son, but a prophet. Solomon asked wisdom, and God gave him not only wisdom, but riches and honour besides; Jacob prayed that God would but give him food and raiment, and the Lord increased his pilgrim's staff into two bands, Gen. xxxii. 10. God is often better to us than our prayers, as when Gehazi asked but one talent, Naaman would needs force two upon him, 2 Kings v. 23. We ask one talent of mercy, and God gives two talents. The woman of Canaan asked but a crumb, namely, to have the life of her child; and Christ gave her more, he sent her home with the life of her soul.

7. The great success the prayer of faith hath found; like Jonathan's bow, it hath not returned empty. *Vocula pater dicta in corde*, faith Luther. This little word, father, pronounced in faith, hath overcome God, Gen. xxxii. 11. 'Deliver me, I pray thee.' And this was mixed with faith in the promise, ver. 12. 'Thou saidest I will surely do thee good:' and this prayer had power with God, and prevailed, Hos. xii. 4. The prayer of faith hath opened prison-doors, stopt the chariot of the sun, locked and unlocked heaven, James v. 17. The prayer of faith hath strangled the plots of enemies in the birth, it hath routed their forces; Moses' prayer against Amalek did more than Joshua's sword; and may not this hearten and corroborate faith in prayer?

8. If all this will not prevail, consider how heartless and comfortless it is to pray, and not in faith: the heart misgives secretly, God doth not hear, nor will he grant. Faithless praying must needs be comfortless; for there is no promise made to unbelieving prayer. It is sad sailing where there is no anchoring, and sad praying where there is no promise to anchor upon, James i. 7. The disciples toiled all night and caught nothing: the unbeliever toils in prayer and catcheth nothing; he receives not

any spiritual blessings, pardon of sin, or grace : as for the temporal mercies the unbeliever hath, he cannot look upon them as the fruit of prayer, but as the overflowings and spillings of God's bounty, oh therefore labour to exert and put forth faith in prayer.

*Obj. But there is so much sin cleaves to my prayer, that I fear it is not the prayer of faith, and God will not hear it.*

*Ans.* If thou mournest for this, it hinders not but that thy prayer may be in faith, and God may hear it : weakness in prayer shall not make void the saints' prayers, Psalm xxxi. 22. 'I said in my haste, I am cut off.' There was much unbelief in this prayer : 'I said in my haste : ' in the Hebrew, 'in my trembling.' David's faith did tremble and faint, yet God heard his prayer. The saints' passions do not hinder the saints' prayers, James v. 17. Therefore be not discouraged ; though sin will cleave to thy holy offering, yea these two things may comfort, thou mayest pray with faith, though with weakness ; and God sees the sincerity, and will pass by the infirmity.

*Qu. How shall we do to pray in faith ?*

*Ans.* Implore the Spirit of God : we cannot say, 'our Father,' but by the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit helps us, not only to pray with sighs and groans, but with faith. The Spirit carries us to God, not only as to a Creator, but a Father, Gal. iv. 6. 'He hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' 'Crying' there the Spirit causeth us to pray with fervency : 'Abba, Father,' there the Spirit helpeth us to pray with faith. Prayer is the key of heaven, the Spirit helps faith to turn this key, and then it unlocks heaven.

## OF THE FIRST PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MARTH. vi. 9. *Hallowed be thy Name.*

HAVING spoken of the introduction to the Lord's prayer, 'after this manner pray ye : ' and the preface, 'Our Father which art in heaven ; ' I come now thirdly to the prayer itself, which consists of seven petitions : a short body of divinity is contained in them. I begin with the first petition.

I. 'Hallowed be thy name.' In the Latin, it is, *sanctificetur nomen tuum*, sanctified be thy name. In this petition, 'hallowed be thy name,' we pray, that God's name may shine forth gloriously, and that it may be honoured and sanctified by us, in the whole course and tenor of our lives. It was the angels' song, 'glory be to God in the highest ; ' that is, let his name be

glorified and hallowed. This petition, 'hallowed be thy name,' is set in the fore-front to shew, that the hallowing of God's name is to be preferred before all things; 1. It is to be preferred before life; we pray, 'Hallowed be thy name,' before we pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It is to be preferred before salvation, Rom. ix. 1. God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. As Christ said of love, Matth. xxii. 37. 'This is the first and great commandment: so I may say of this petition, 'Hallowed be thy name,' it is the first and great petition; it contains the most weighty thing in religion, God's glory. When some of the other petitions shall be useless and out of date, we shall not need to pray in heaven, 'Give us our daily bread,' because there shall be no hunger; nor 'Forgive us our trespasses,' because there shall be no sin; nor 'Lead us not into temptation, because the old serpent is not there to tempt: yet the hallowing of God's name, shall be of great use and request in heaven; we shall be ever singing hallelujahs, which is nothing else but the hallowing of God's name. Every person in the blessed Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must have this honour; to be hallowed; their glory being equal, and their majesty co-eternal. 'Hallowed be thy name.' To admire God's name is not enough; we may admire a conqueror; but when we say, 'Hallowed be thy name;' we set God's name above every name, and not only admire him, but adore him; and this is proper only to the Deity. For the further explication, I shall propound three questions:

1. *What is meant by God's name?*

2. *What is meant by hallowing God's name?*

3. *When may we be said to hallow or sanctify God's name?*

Qu. 1. *What is meant by God's name?*

Ans. 1. By God's name is meant his essence, Psal. xx. 1. 'The name of the God of Jacob defend thee;' that is, the God of Jacob defend thee.

2. By God's name is meant any thing by which God may be known; as a man is known by his name, God's name is his attributes, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness; by these God is known as by his name.

Qu. 2. *What is meant by hallowing God's name?*

Ans. To hallow, is a *communi separare*, to set a part a thing from the common use, to some sacred end. As the vessels of the sanctuary were said to be hallowed; so, to hallow God's name, is to set it apart from all abuses, and to use it holily and reverently: in particular, hallowing of God's name is to give him high honour and veneration, and render his name sacred. We can add nothing to God's essential glory; but we are said to honour and sanctify his name, when we lift him up in the

world, and make him appear greater in the eyes of others.—When a prince is crowned, there is something added really to his honour; but when we go to crown God with our triumphs and hallelujahs, there is nothing added to his essential glory: God cannot be greater than he is, only we may make him appear greater in the eyes of others.

*Qu. 3. When may we be said to hallow and sanctify God's name?*

*Ans. 1.* When we profess his name. Our meeting in his holy assembly is an honour done to God's name; this is good, but it is not enough. All that were God's livery by profession, are not true servants; there are some professors Christ will at the last day profess against, Matth. vii. 23. 'I will profess I never knew you.' Therefore, to go a little further.

2. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we have an high appreciation and esteem of God; we set him highest in our thoughts: the Hebrew word to honour, signifies to esteem precious; we conceive of God in our minds as the most super-excellent and infinite good; we apprehend in God, a constellation of all beauties and delights; we adore God in his glorious attributes, which are the several beams by which his divine nature shines forth: we adore God in his works, which are bound up in three great volumes, creation, redemption, providence: We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we lift him highest in our souls; we esteem him a super-eminent and incomprehensible God.

3. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we trust in his name, Psalm xxxiii. 21. 'We have trusted in his holy name: No way can we bring more reverence of honour to God, or make his crown shine brighter, than by confiding in him, Rom. iv. 20. 'Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God:' there was an hallowing of God's name: as unbelief stains God's honour, and eclipseth his name, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, makes God a liar:' so faith doth glorify and hallow God's name: The believer trusts his best jewels in God's hands, Psalm iii. v. 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit:' Faith in a Mediator doth more honour and sanctify God's name, than martyrdom, or the most sublime acts of obedience.

4. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we never make mention of his name, but with the highest reverence: God's name is sacred, and it must not be spoken of, but with veneration: the scripture, when it speaks of God, gives him his titles of honour, Genesis xiv. 20. 'Blessed be the most High God:' Nehemiah ix. 5. 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all praise:' To speak vainly or slightly of God, is a profaning of his name, and is a taking of his name in vain: Let

his name be hallowed : By giving God his venerable titles, we do as it were hang his jewels on his crown.

5. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we love his name, Pf. v. 11. 'Let them that love thy name be joyful:' and that love, which is honouring God's name, must be a special discriminating love, the cream and flower of our love; such a love as we give to none besides; as the wife honours her husband, by giving him such a love as she giveth to none else, a conjugal love; so we hallow God's name, by giving him such a love as we give to none else, a love joined with worship, 1 sal. xlv. 11. 'He is thy God, and worship thou him.'

6. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we give him an holy and spiritual worship: 1. We give him the same kind of worship that he hath appointed: Levit. x. 3. 'I will be sanctified of all them that come nigh to me:' that is, I will be sanctified with that very worship I have appointed: It is the purity of worship God loves better than the pomp; it is a dishonouring of God's name, to bring any thing into his worship which he hath not instituted; as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served, men will go to prescribe to him, and superadd their inventions: This, God looks upon as offering strange fire, and it is an high provocation. 2. We give God the same heart-devotion in worship as he hath appointed, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord:' The word for fervent, is a metaphor that alludes to water, that seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in holy duties: To give God outside worship, and not the devotion of the heart, is, instead of hallowing and sanctifying him in an ordinance, to abuse him; as if one calls for wine, and give you an empty glass; It is to deal with God, as Prometheus did with Jupiter, who did eat the flesh and present Jupiter with nothing but bones covered over with skin. Then we hallow God's name, and sanctify him in an ordinance, when we give him the vitals of religion, an heart flaming with zeal.

7. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we hallow his day, Jer. xvii. 22. 'Hallow ye the sabbath-day.' Our Christian sabbath, which comes in the room of the Jews' sabbath, is called the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10. This was anciently called *dies lucis*, a day of light: wherein Christ the Sun of righteousness shines in an extraordinary manner. It is an honour done to God, to hallow his sabbath. 1. We must rest on this day from all secular works, Jer. xvii. 21. 'Bear no burden on the sabbath-day.' As Joseph, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians: so, when we would have converse with God on this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments: It is observable, Mary Magdalene refused to anoint Christ's dead body on the sabbath-day, Luke xxiii. 56. She

had before prepared her ointment and spices, but came not to the sepulchre till the sabbath was past; she rested on that day from civil work, though it were a commendable and glorious work, the anointing of Christ's dead body. 2. We must in a solemn manner devote ourselves to God on this day; we must spend this whole day with God. Some will hear the word, but leave all their religion at church; they do nothing at home, they do not pray or repeat the word in their houses, and so they rob God of a part of his day: it is bewailing to see how God's day is profaned. Let no man think God's name is hallowed while his sabbath is broken.

8. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we ascribe the honour of all we do to him, Psalm xciv. 8. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.' Herod, instead of hallowing God's name, stained the honour of his name, in assuming that praise to himself which was due to God, Acts xii. 23. We ought to take the honour from ourselves and give it to God, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured more than they all:' one would think this had favoured of pride, but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free grace: 'Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, or victory over temptation, he rears up a pillar, and writes upon it, *Hucusque adjuvavit Deus*,—Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. John Baptist transferred all the honour from himself to Christ; he was content to be eclipsed, that Christ might shine the more, John i. 15. 'He that cometh after me is preferred before me.' I am but the herald, the voice of one crying; he is the Prince; I am but a lesser star, he is the Sun: I baptise only with water, he with the Holy Ghost. This is an hallowing God's name, when we translate all the honour from ourselves to God, Psalm cxv. 1. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.' The king of Sweden wrote that motto on the battle at Lypswich, *Ista a Domino facta sunt*, The Lord hath wrought this victory for us!

9. We hallow and sanctify God's name, by obeying him: how doth a son more honour his father, than by obedience? Psalm xl. 8. 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' The wise men shewed honour to Christ, not only by bowing the knee to him, but by presenting him with gold and myrrh, Matth. ii. 11. We hallow God's name, not only by lifting up our eyes and hands to heaven, and bowing the knee in prayer, but by presenting God with golden obedience. As the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for God, and lay out our strength in his service. It was a saying of the reverend Doctor Jewel, "I have spent and exhausted myself in the labours of my holy calling." 'To obey is better than sacrifice.' The cherubims

representing the angels, are set forth with their wings displayed, to shew how ready they are to do service to God. To obey is angelical ; to pretend honour to God's name, yet not to obey, is but a devout compliment. Abraham honoured God by obedience ; he was ready to sacrifice his son, though the son of his old age, and a son of the promise, Gen. xxii. 16. ' By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son ; that in blessing, I will bless thee.'

10. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we lift up God's name in our praises. God is said to sanctify, and man is said to sanctify : God sanctifies us, by giving us grace ; and we sanctify him by giving him praise. What were our tongues given us for, but to be organs of God's praise ? Ps. lxxi. 8. ' Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day.' Rev. v. 13. ' Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.' Thus God's name is hallowed and sanctified in heaven ; the angels and glorified saints are singing hallelujahs ; let us begin the work of heaven here. David did sing forth God's praises and doxologies in a most melodious manner, therefore was called the sweet singer of Israel, 1 Sam. xxiii. 1. Praising God, is an hallowing of God's name ; it spreads his renown, it displays the trophies of his excellency, it exalts him in the eyes of others, Ps. l. 23. ' Who so offereth praise, glorifieth me.' This is one of the highest and purest acts of religion ; in prayer we act like men, in praise we act like angels : this is the music of heaven, this is a work fit for a saint, Ps. cxlix. 5, 6. ' Let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouths.' None but saints can in a right manner thus hallow God's name by praising him. As every one hath not skill to play on the viol and organ, so every one cannot rightly sound forth God's harmonious praises ; only the saints can do it ; they only can make their tongue and heart join in concert, Ps. cxi. 1. ' I will bless thee, O Lord, with my whole heart ; and Psalm lxvi. 17. ' He was extolled with my tongue.' There was joining in concert. This hallowing God's name by praise is very becoming a Christian : it is unbecoming to murmur, this is a dishonouring God's name ; but it becomes the saints to be spiritual choiristers in singing forth the honour of God's name. It is called the ' garment of praise,' Isa. xli. 3. How comely and handsome is this garment of praise for a saint to wear ? Ps. xxxiii. 1. ' Praise is comely for the righteous.' Especially, it is an high degree of hallowing God's name, when we can speak well of God, and bless him in an afflicted state, Job. i. 21. The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Many will bless God when he gives ; but to bless him when he takes away,



is in an high degree to honour God, and hallow his name. Let us thus magnify God's name. Hath not God given us abundant matter of praising him? he hath given us grace, a mercy spun and woven out of his bowels; and he intends to crown grace with glory: this should make us hallow God's name by being trumpets of his praise.

11. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we sympathize with him; we grieve when his name suffers, 1. We lay to heart his dishonour. How was Moses affected with God's dishonour? He breaks the tables, *Exod. xxxii. 19.* We grieve to see God's sabbaths profaned, his worship adulterated, the wine of truth mingled with error. 2. We grieve when God's church is brought low, because now God's name suffers. Nehemiah lays to heart the miseries of Sion; his complexion begins to alter, and he looks sad, *Neh. ii. 3.* 'Why is thy countenance sad?' what! sad, when the king's cup-bearer, and wine so near! O but it fared ill with the church of God, and religion seemed to lose ground, and God's name suffered: therefore Nehemiah grows weary of the court, he leaves his wine and mingles his drink with weeping; this holy sympathy, and grieving, when God's name suffers, God esteems an honouring and sanctifying his name. Hezekiah grieved when the king of Assyria reproached the living God, *Isa. xxxvii. 17.* 'He went into his chamber, and spread the letter of blasphemy before the Lord.' *2 Kings xix. 14.* And no doubt watered the letter with his tears; he seemed not to be so much troubled at the fear of losing his own life and kingdom, as that God should lose his glory.

12. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we give that same honour to God the Son, as we give to God the Father, *John v. 23.* 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' The Socinians deny Christ's divinity, saying that he is a mere man; this is to make him below the angels, *Psal. viii. 5.* for the human nature, considered in itself, is below the angelical: this is to reflect dishonour upon the Lord of glory. We must give equal honour to the Son as to the Father? we must believe Christ's Deity, he is the picture of his Father's glory, *Heb. i. 3.* If the God-head be in Christ, he must needs be God; but the God-head shines in him, *Col. iii. 9.* 'In whom dwells the fulness of the God-head bodily;' therefore, he is God. How could these divine titles be given to Christ? Omnipotency, *Heb. i. 3.* Ubiquity, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* A power of sealing pardons, *Matth. ix. 6.* Co-equality with God the Father, both in power and dignity, *John v. 21, 23.* How, I say, could these titles of honour be ascribed to Christ, if he were not crowned with the Deity? When we believe Christ's God-head, and build our hope of salvation on the cor-

ner stone of his merit : when we see neither the righteousness of the law, nor of angels can justify, but we flee to Christ's blood as to the altar of refuge : this is an honouring and sanctifying of God's name. God never thinks his name to be hallowed, unless his Son be honoured.

13. We hallow God's name by standing up for his truths. Much of God's glory lies in his truths : God's truths are his oracles : God entrusts us with his truths as a treasure ; we have not a richer jewel to entrust God with than our souls, nor God hath not a greater jewel to intrust us with than his truths. God's truths set forth his glory ; now when we are zealous advocates for God's truths, this is an honour done to God's name. Athanasius was called the bulwark of truth : he stood up in the defence of God's truths against the Arians, and so was a pillar in the temple of God : better have truth without peace, than peace without truth. It concerns the sons of Zion to stand up for the great doctrines of the gospel : the doctrine of the Trinity, the Hypostatical union, justification by faith, the saints' perseverance, we are bid to contend earnestly, Jude 3. to strive as in an agony for the faith, that is the doctrine of faith : this contending for the truth, brings great revenues to heaven's exchequer ; this is an hallowing of God's name. Contend for the truth : some can contend for ceremonies, but not for the truth. We should count him unwise, that should contend more for a box of counters than for his box of evidences.

14. We hallow and sanctify God's name, by making as many profelytes as we can to him, by all holy expedients, counsel, prayer, example, we endeavour the salvation of others. How did Monica, St. Austin's mother, labour for his conversion ? She had sorer pangs in travel for his new birth, than for his natural birth. It is an hallowing of God's name when we diffuse the sweet favour of godliness, and propagate religion to others ; when not only we ourselves honour God, but are instruments to make others honour him : certainly when the heart is seasoned with grace, there will be an endeavour to season others. God's glory is as dear to a saint as his own salvation ; and that this glory may be promoted, he endeavours the conversion of souls : every convert is a member added to Christ. Let us thus hallow God's name, by labouring to advance piety in others : especially, let us endeavour that those who are nearly related to us, or are under our roof, shall honour God, Josh. xxiv. 15. ' As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Let us make our houses Bethels, places where God's name is called upon, Col. iv. 15. ' Salute Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.' Let the parent endeavour that his children may honour God and the master that his servants honour him ; read the word, drop holy instruction, perfume your

houses with prayer : the Jews had sacrifices in their family, as well as in the tabernacle, Exod. xii. 3. 'This is an hallowing, God's name, when we make profelytes to him, and endeavour that all under our charge should honour and sanctify his name.

15. We hallow God's name, when we prefer the honour of God's name before the dearest things. 1. We prefer the honour of God's name before our own credit. The saints of old have, for the honour of God, been willing to endure reproach, Ps. lxxix. 7. 'For thy sake I have borne reproach.' David cared not what reproach he suffered, so God's name might not suffer. The prophet Elijah was called in derision, the 'hairy prophet;' and the prophet Isaiah, 'the bearer of burdens;' and the prophet Zephaniah, the 'bitter prophet:' but they did bind these reproaches as a crown about their head : the honour of God's name was dearer to them than their own honour : Moses esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26. The apostles went away rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, Acts v. 41. that they were graced so far as to be disgraced for the name of Christ ; this is an hallowing God's name, when we are content to have our name eclipsed, that God's name may shine the more. 2. We prefer the honour of God's name before our worldly profit and interest, Matth. xix. 28. 'We have forsaken all and followed thee.' When these two, God and estate, come in competition, we will rather let estate go than God's love and favour. Thus that noble marquis of Vico parted with a fair estate using these words "Let their money perish with them, that count all the gold and silver in the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ." 3. We prefer the honour of God's name before our life, Rom. viii. 36. 'For thy sake are we killed all the day long.' The honour done to God's name, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him as we do to kings, but God's honour comes in another way, and that is by the sufferings of his people : when the world sees how entirely God's people love him, that they will die in his service, this exalts and honours God's name : God's crown doth flourish in the ashes of his martyrs. St. Basil speaks of a virgin condemned to the fire, who having her life and estate offered her, if she would bow to the idol, answered *Valeat vita pereat pecunia* : let life and money go, welcome Christ. When God's glory weighs heaviest in the balance, and we are willing to suffer the loss of all, rather than God's name should suffer, now we do, in an high degree, hallow God's name.

16. *ult.* We do hallow and sanctify God's name, by an holy conversation, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people : that ye should shew forth the praises of him

who hath called you.' As an unholy life doth dishonour God's name, Rom. ii. 24. 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles thro' you;' so by our holy and Bible-conversation we honour God's name. A holy life speaks louder than all the anthems and praises in the world; tho' the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet when our light so shines, that others behold it, now they glorify God: when our lives shine, now God's name shines. The Macedonians used one day in the year to wear the picture of Alexander set with pearl and costly jewels; so, when we carry the picture of Christ about us in our holy example, now we bring honour to God's name.

*Use I.* See the true note and character of a godly person; he is a sanctifier of God's name, 'Hallowed be thy name.' A true saint doth ambitiously endeavour to advance God's name: this is the question he asks himself in every thing he is going about: Will this action tend to the honour of God's name? will this exalt God? This was St. Paul's chief design, that 'Christ might be magnified,' Phil. i. 20. viz. that the crown upon his head might flourish: a godly man thinks it is scarce worth the while to live, if he may not bring some revenues of honour to God's name.

*Use II.* I may here take up a sad lamentation, and speak, as the apostle Paul weeping, Phil. iii. 18. To consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed and sanctified, is dishonoured. God's name which is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls, suffers deeply. We are apt to speak of our sufferings; alas! what are all our sufferings? God's name suffers most. God's name is the dearest thing he hath; how do men stand upon their name and honour? God's name is this day dishonoured, it is like the sun in an eclipse. Theodosius took it heinously when they threw dirt upon his statue; but now (which is far worse) disgrace is thrown upon the glorious name of Jehovah. God's name, instead of being hallowed, is dishonoured by all sorts, (1.) By heathens, (2.) Turks, (3.) Jews, (4.) Papists, (5.) Protestants.

1. By heathens: they have a knowledge of a Godhead by the light of nature, Rom. i. 19. but they dishonour God, and sin against the light of nature. The Egyptians worship an ox; the Persians worship the sun; the Grecians and Romans, Jupiter; and the Parthians worship the devil.

2. God's name is dishonoured by the Turks; they adore Mahomet their great prophet, as one divinely inspired: Mahomet was of an impure vicious life; Mahomet plucks the crown from Christ's head, denying his Deity.

3. God's name is dishonoured by the Jews who give not equal honour and adoration to God the Son, as to God the Father: they expect a Messiah yet to come, *seculum futurum*,

they believe not in Christ, they blaspheme him, and slight righteousness imputed; they vilify the Christian sabbath.

4. God's name is dishonoured by the papists. Popery is a God-dishonouring religion; they dishonour God's name. (1.) By their idolatry, 'which is spiritual adultery,' Ezek. xxii. 37. Idolatry is to worship a false God, or the true God in a false manner; this they are guilty of. 1. They dishonour God by their idolatry, in making graven images, and giving the same honour to them as is due to God; images are teachers of lies, Hab. ii. 18. they represent God in a bodily shape. 2. By their idolatry in the mass; worshipping the host, and offering it up as a sacrifice for sin; the apostle saith, Heb. x. 14. 'By one offering Christ hath perfected them that are sanctified:' but as if Christ's offering on the cross was imperfect, they offer him up daily in the mass, which is a dishonour done to Christ's priestly office. (2.) The papists, instead of hallowing God's name, dishonour God's name, by locking up the scriptures in an unknown tongue; they as the Philistines pluck out the people's eyes, and then make sport with them: the Bible is a shining light, but they draw a curtain over it; they 'take away the key of knowledge,' Luke xi. 52. And hinder God's glory by hindering men's salvation. (3.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it by giving men indulgences. They say, the pope, as Peter's successor, hath power to grant indulgences, by virtue whereof, men are set free in the sight of God. 1. It is to steal a flower from the crown of heaven. The pope assumes a power to pardon, which is God's prerogative royal, Matth. ii. 7. 'Who can forgive sin but God only?' 2. The pope, by his indulgence, encourageth men to sin. What need the papists care what sins they commit, when they have a licence and patent from the pope to bear them harmless (4.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour God's name, by their invocation to saints. We are to pray only to God, Matth. vi. 4. 'Pray to thy Father;' not pray to a saint, or the virgin Mary, but pray to your Father in heaven: we may pray to none but whom we may believe in, Rom. x. 14. The saints in heaven are ignorant of our grievances, Isa. lxiii. 17. 'Abraham is ignorant of us.' (5.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their luxury and uncleanness: they allow of stews. At Rome, fornication keeps open shop, and is in some cases preferred before honourable matrimony: *urbs est jam tota lapamur*. (6.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it by their blasphemies. They give equal, nay, more honour to the virgin Mary than to Christ; they ascribe more to her milk; than to his blood; they call her *Scala Cæli*, the ladder of heaven: *Janua paradisi*, the gate of Paradise. In their doxologies they say, "Praise be to the Virgin Mary, and also to Christ." What blasphemy is this,

to set the creature above the Creator! They say to her, *O felix puerpera, nostra piarum scelera!* O happy mother of a Son that purgest away our crimes! (7.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their lies: their golden legend is an imposture, and is full of lying wonders: They shew John Baptist's forehead for a relique in Spain, yet his whole head they affirm to be seen in St. Sylvester in Rome; they shew St. Peter's shadow at Rome: indeed we read of St. Peter's shadow, Acts v. 15. But it is strange how the papists could catch his shadow, and keep it by them so long. (8.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by baptizing sin with the name of virtue. Breach of oaths is with the papists a virtue. If a man hath bound his soul to God by an oath, yet to violate this oath is virtuous, if it may propagate the catholic cause. Killing those who are of a different religion, is not only venial, but a virtue among catholics. Destroying two hundred thousand of the Albigeneses, who were protestants, was commended as a glorious action, honoured with a triumph at Rome, and crowned with his holiness' blessing. Is not this an high dishonour to God, to gild over the foulest crimes with the name of virtue and piety? (9.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their damnable assertions: 1. The papists affirm, that the pope is above scripture; that he may dispense with it, and, that his canons bind more than the word of God. 2. They teach merit by good works; but if a debtor cannot pay his creditor, how can he merit at his hands? 3. That the scripture is not a perfect rule of faith, and manners; therefore they eik it out with their traditions, which they hold to be of equal authority. 4. They teach that an implicit faith is saving; though one may have an implicit faith, yet be ignorant of all the articles of religion. 5. They say, that the inward act of the mind, is not required in God's worship? diversion of the mind in duty, though one prays and never thinks of God, is no sin, saith Angelus and Sylvester, and other papists. 6. The papists make habitual love to God unnecessary: it is not needful, saith Balarmino, to perform any acts of religion out of love to God. Stapleton and Cajetan affirm, that the precept of loving God with all our heart is not binding: by which they cut asunder the sinews and soul of all religion. Thus, instead of honouring God's name, the papists dishonour it. Let us pray heartily, that this Romish religion may never again get footing in this nation: God grant that this poisonous weed of popery may never be watered here; but that, it being a plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, it may be rooted up.

5. God's name is dishonoured by carnal protestants. How is God's name this day dishonoured in England? his name is like the sun in an eclipse. Christians instead of hallowing God's

name, reproach and dishonour it. (1.) By their tongues. (2.) By their lives.

1. By their tongues: (1.) They speak irreverently of God's name: God's name is sacred, Deut. xxviii. 58. 'That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name: the Lord thy God.' The names of kings are not mentioned without giving them their titles of honour, high and mighty: but men speak irreverently of God, as if he were like one of them, Pl. l. 21. This is a taking God's name in vain. (2.) They swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name but in oaths: how is God dishonoured, when men rend and tear his name by oaths and imprecations! Jer. xxiii. 10. 'Because of swearing the land mourns.' If God will reckon with men for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account book? O but, saith one, I cannot help it; it is a custom of swearing I have got, and, I hope, God will forgive me! *Ans.* Is this a good plea, a custom of swearing? This is no excuse, but an aggravation of sin: as if one that had been accused of killing a man should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder; this were an aggravation of the offence; will not the judge say, thou shalt the rather die? so it is here.

2. As men dishonour God by their tongues, so by their lives. What is it to say, 'Hallowed be thy name,' when in their lives they profane his name? They dishonour God by their atheism, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, perjury, intemperance, injustice, men hang out a flag of defiance against heaven. As the Thracians, when it thunders, shoot their arrows against heaven; so men shoot their sins as bearded arrows against heaven. Sinners are hardened in sin, they despise counsel, they laugh at reproof, they have cast off the veil of modesty. Satan hath taken such full possession of them, that when they sin, they glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19. They brag how many new oaths they have invented, how oft they have been drunk, how many they have defiled; they declare their sin as Sodom; such horrid impieties are committed, that a modest heathen would blush at. Men, in this age, sin at that rate, as if either they did not believe there were an hell, or as if they feared hell would be full ere they could get thither. Was God's name every so openly dishonoured? All our preaching will not make them leave their sins. What a black veil is drawn over the face of religion at this day? *Vivimus in temporum foecibus*—Seneca. We live in the dregs of time, wherein the common shore of wickedness runs; physicians call it [Gr. *kachexia*,] when there is no part of the body free from distemper. England hath a *kachexy*; it is all over disease: 'The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint,' Isa. i. 6. As black vapours rising out of the earth, cloud and darken the sun; so the sins of people in our age, like hel-

lith vapours, cast a cloud upon God's glorious name. O that our eyes were like limbecs, dropping the water of holy tears, to consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed, is polluted and profaned! And, may not we justly fear some heavy judgments? Can God put up our affronts any longer? Can he endure to have his name reproached? Will a king suffer his crown-jewels to be trampled in the dust? Do not we see the symptoms of God's anger? Do we not see his judgments hovering over us? Sure God is whetting his sword, he hath bent his bow, and is preparing his arrows to shoot. *Qualis per arva leo fulvum minace fronte concutiens jubam*, Senec. Trag. The body politic is in a paroxysm, or burning fit; and may not the Lord cause a sad phlebotomy? Seeing we will not leave our sins, he may make us lose our blood. May we not fear that the ark should remove, the vision cease, the stars in God's church be removed, and we should follow the gospel to the grave? When God's name, which should be hallowed, is profaned among a people, it is just with God to write that dismal epitaph upon a nation's tomb, 'The glory is departed.' And, that I may speak to the consciences of all, and deal impartially, it were well if only the profane party were guilty; but, may not many professors be called to the bar, and indicted of this, that they have dishonoured God's name? 2 Chron. xxviii. 10. 'Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?' Are there not the spots of God's children? Deut. xxxii. 5. If you are diamonds, have you no flaws? have not you your vanities? If your discourse be not profane, is it not vain? Have not you your self-seekings, rash censures, indecent dresses? If the wicked of the land swear, do not you sometimes slander? If they are drunk with wine, are not you sometimes drunk with passion? If their sin be blaspheming, is not your sin murmuring? 'Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord?' The sins of God's children go nearer to his heart, than the sins of others, Deut. xxxii. 19. 'When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.' The sins of the wicked anger God, the sins of his own people grieve him: he will be sure to punish them, Amos iii. 2. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.' O that our head were waters, that we could make this place a bochim, a place of weepers, that God's children might mix blushing with tears, that they have so little hallowed, and so much eclipsed God's name! Truly God's own people have sinned enough to justify God in all his severe actings against them.

*Use III.* Of exhortation. Let us hallow and sanctify God's name: did we but see a glimpse of God's glory, as Moses did in the rock, the sight of this would draw adoration and praise



from us: could we see 'God face to face,' as the angels in heaven do, could we behold him sitting on his throne like a jasper-stone, Rev. iv. 10. we should presently, at the sight of his glory, do as the twenty-four elders, Rev. iv. 10. 'They worship him that liveth for ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power.' That we may be stirred up to this great duty, the hallowing, adoring and sanctifying God's name, consider,

1. It is the very end of our being; why did God give us our life, but that our living may be an hallowing of his name? Why did he give us souls, but to admire him; and tongues, but to praise him? The excellency of a thing is, when it attains the end for which it was made: the excellency of a star is to give light, of a plant to be fruitful; the excellency of a Christian is to answer the end of his creation, which is to hallow God's name, and live to that God by whom he lives. He who lives, and God hath no honour by him, buries himself alive, and exposeth himself to a curse; Christ cursed the barren fig-tree.

2. God's name is so excellent, that it deserves to be hallowed, Psal. viii. 9. 'How excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Psalm civ. 1. 'Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.' As the sun hath its brightness, whether we admire it or not, so God's name is illustrious and glorious, whether we hallow it or not. In God are all shining perfections, holiness, wisdom, mercy; 'he is worthy to be praised,' 2 Sam. xxii. 4. God is *dignus honore*, worthy of honour, love, adoration. We often bestow titles of honour upon them that do not deserve them; but God is worthy to be praised; his name deserves hallowing; he is above all the honour and praise which the angels in heaven give him.

3. We pray, 'hallowed be thy name;' that is, let thy name be honoured and magnified by us. Now, if we do not magnify his name, we contradict our own prayers: To say, 'hallowed be thy name,' yet not to bring honour to God name, is to take his name in vain.

4. Such as do not hallow God's name, and bring revenues of honour to him, God will get his honour upon them, Exod. xiv. 17. 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.' Pharaoh would not hallow God's name; 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' Well, saith God, if Pharaoh will not honour me, I will get me honour upon him. When God overthrew him and his chariots in the sea, then he got his honour upon him: God's power and justice were glorified in his destruction. There are some whom God hath raised to great power and dignity, and they will not honour God's name, they make use of their power to dishonour God, they cast reproach upon God's name, and revile his servants; well, they who will not honour God, he

will get his honour upon them in their final ruin. Herod did not give glory to God, and God did get his glory upon him, Acts xii. 23. 'The angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms.'

5. It will be no small comfort to us when we come to die, that we have hallowed and sanctified God's name: It was Christ's comfort a little before his death, John xvii. 4. 'I have glorified thee on the earth.' Christ's redeeming mankind was an hallowing and glorifying of God's name; never was more honour brought to God's name, than by this great undertaking of Christ: Now, here was Christ's comfort before his death, that he had hallowed God's name: and brought glory to him. So, what a cordial will this be to us at last, when our whole life hath been an hallowing of God's name? We have loved him with our hearts, praised him with our lips, honoured him with our lives; we have been to the praise of his glory, Eph. i. 6. At the hour of death, all your earthly comforts will vanish; to think how rich you have been, or what pleasures you have enjoyed upon earth, this will not give one drachm of comfort: what is one the better for an estate that is spent? But now, to have conscience witnessing, that you have hallowed God's name, your whole life hath been a glorifying of him, what sweet peace and satisfaction will this give? That servant who hath been all day working in the vineyard, how glad is he when evening comes, that he shall receive his pay! Such as have spent their lives in honouring God, how sweet will death be, when they shall receive the recompence of reward? What comfort was it to Hezekiah, when he was on his sick-bed, and could appeal to God, Isaiah xxxviii. 3. 'Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight?' I have hallowed thy name, I have brought all the honour I could to thee, 'I have done that which is good in thy sight.'

6. There is nothing lost by what we do for God; if we bring honour to his name, he will honour us. Honour is as Balak said to Balam, Numbers xxii. 37. 'Am not I able to promote thee to honour?' So if we hallow and sanctify God's name, is not he able to promote us to honour? 1. He will honour us in our life. (1.) He will put honour upon our persons: He will number us among his jewels, Malachi iii. 17. He will make us a royal diadem in his hand, Isaiah lxii. 3. He will lift us up in the eyes of others, Zechariah ix. 17. 'They shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up, as an ensign of glory:' He will esteem us as the cream and flower of the creation, Isaiah xliiii. 4. 'Since thou hast been precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.' (2.) God will put honour upon your names, Prov. x. 17. 'The memory of the just is blessed.' How re-

nowned have the faints been in all ages, who have hallowed God's name? How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness, David for his zeal, Paul for his love to Christ? Their names, as a precious ointment, send forth a sweet perfume in God's church to this day. 2. God will honour us at our death, he will send his angels to carry us up with triumph into heaven, Luke xvi. 22. 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' Amasis, king of Egypt, had his chariot drawn with four kings, which he had conquered in war; but what is this to the glory every believer shall have at his death? He shall be carried by the angels of God. 3. God will put honour upon us after death: (1.) He will put glory upon our bodies: we shall be as the angels, not for substance but quality; our bodies shall be agile and nimble: now our bodies are as a weight, then they shall be as a wing, moving swiftly from place to place; our bodies shall be full of clarity and brightness, like Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. The bodies of the faints shall be as cloth dyed into a scarlet colour, made more illustrious; they shall be so clear and transparent, that the soul shall sparkle through them, as the wine through the glass. (2.) God will put glory upon our souls; if the cabinet of the body shall be so illustrious, of what orient brightness shall the jewel be? Then will be the great coronation day, when the faints shall wear the robe of immortality, and the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away. O how glorious will that garland be which is made of the flowers of paradise! who then would not hallow and glorify God's name, and spread his renown in the world, who will put such immortal honour upon his people, as 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive.'

7 & ult. Such as do not hallow God's name, but profane and dishonour it, God will pour contempt upon them; though they be never so great, and though clothed in purple and scarlet, yet they are abhorred of God, and their name shall rot. Though the name of Judas be in the Bible, and the name of Pontius Pilate be in the Creed, yet their names stand there for infamy, as being traitors to the crown of heaven, Nahum i. 14. 'I will make thy grave, for thou art vile.' It is spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes, he was a king, and his name signifies illustrious, yet God esteemed him a vile person. To shew how base the wicked are in God's esteem, he compares them to things most vile; to chaff, Ps. i. 4. To dross, Psal. cxix. 118. and the filth that foams out of the sea, Isa. lviii. 20. And as God doth thus vilely esteem such as do not hallow his name, so he sends them to a vile place at last. Vagrants are sent to the house of correction: hell is the house of correction, which the wicked

are sent to when they die. Let all this prevail with us to hallow and sanctify God's name.

Qu. *What may we do to honour and sanctify God's name?*

Ans. Let us get, (1.) A sound knowledge of God, (2.) A sincere love to God :

1. A sound knowledge of God, take a view of his superlative excellencies ; his holiness, his incomprehensible goodness. The angels know God better than we, therefore they sanctify his name, and sing hallelujahs to him. And let us labour to know him to be our God, Psal. xlviii. 14. ' This God is our God : ' we may dread God as a judge, but we cannot honour him as a father, till we know he is our God.

2. Get a sincere love to God : A love of appreciation, and a love of complacency to delight in him, John xxi. 15. ' Lord, thou knowest I love thee.' He can never honour his master who doth not love him. The reason God's name is not more hallowed, is because his name is not more loved. So much for the first petition.

## OF THE SECOND PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 10. *Thy Kingdom come.*

A SOUL truly devoted to God, joins heartily in this petition, *adveniat regnum tuum*, ' Thy kingdom come : ' In which words this great truth is implied, that God is a King ; he who hath a kingdom, can be no less than a king, Psalm xlvii. 7. ' God is King of all the earth.' And he is a King upon his throne. Psalm xlvii. 8. ' God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.' (1.) He hath a regal title, High and Mighty, Isaiah lvii. 15. ' Thus saith the High and Lofty One.' (2.) He hath the ensigns of royalty : his sword, Deut. xxxii. 41. ' If I whet my glittering sword.' He hath his sceptre, Heb. i. 8. ' A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' (3.) He hath his crown royal, Rev. xix. 12. ' On his head were many crowns.' He hath his *jura regalia*, his kingly prerogatives ; he hath power to make laws, to seal pardons, which are the flowers and jewels belonging to his crown. Thus the Lord is king.

And, *edly*, He is a great King, Psalm xcv. 3. ' A great King above all gods.' He is great in and of himself : and not like other kings, who are made great by their subjects. That he is so great a king, appears, (1.) By the immenseness of his being ; Jer. xxiii. 24. ' Do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith

the Lord.' His centre is every where; he is no where included, yet no where excluded; he is so immensely great, that 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain him,' 1 Kings viii. 27. (2.) His greatness appears by the effects of his power, 'He made heaven and earth,' Psalm cxxiv. 8. and can unmake it. 'God can with a breath crumble us to dust: with a word he can unpin the world, and break the axle-tree of it in pieces; he pours contempt upon the mighty,' Job xii. 21. 'He cuts off the spirit of princes,' Psalm lxxvi. 11. He is Lord Paramount, 'who doth whatever he will,' Psalm cxv. 12. 'He weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance,' Isa. xl. 12.

3dly, God is a glorious King? Psalm xxiv. 20. 'Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory.' He hath internal glory, Psalm xciii. 1. 'The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty.' Other kings have royal and sumptuous apparel, to make them appear glorious to the beholders, but all their magnificence is borrowed; but God is clothed with majesty, his own glorious essence is instead of royal robes, and 'he hath girded himself with strength.' Kings have their guard about them to defend their persons, because they are not able to defend themselves; but God needs no guard or assistance from others: 'He hath girded himself with strength.' His own power is his life-guard, Psalm lxxxix. 6. 'Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?' God hath a pre-eminence above all other kings for majesty, Rev. xix. 16. 'He hath on his vesture a name written, *Rex Regum*, KING OF KINGS.' He hath the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, Psalm xxix. 10. 'The Lord sitteth King for ever.' Though God hath many heirs, yet no successors. He sets up his throne where no other king doth; he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: angels serve him, all the kings of the earth hold their crowns and diadems by immediate tenure from this great King, Prov. viii. 15. 'By me kings reign;' and to this Lord Jehovah all kings must give account, and from God's tribunal there is no appeal.

Use I. Branch 1. If God be so great a King and sits King for ever, then it is no disparagement for us to serve him; *Deo servire est regnare*: it is an honour to serve a king. If the angels fly swiftly upon the King of heaven's message, Dan. ix. 21. then well may we look upon it as a favour to be taken into his royal service. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be God's servant, than to be an emperor. It is more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us. Every subject of this king is crowned with regal honour, Rev. i. 6. 'Who hath made us kings.' Therefore as the queen of Sheba, having seen

the glory of Solomon's kingdom, said, 'Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee,' 1 Kings x. 8. So, happy are those saints who stand before the King of heaven, and wait on his throne.

*Branch 2.* If God be such a glorious King, crowned with wisdom, armed with power, bespangled with riches, then it shews us what prudence it is to have this King to be ours: to say, as Ps. v. 2. 'My King, and my God.' It is counted great policy to be on the strongest side; if we belong to the King of heaven, we are sure to be on the strongest side: the King of glory can with ease destroy his adversaries: he can pull down their pride, befoul their policy, restrain their malice. That stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which smote the image, Dan. ii. 34. was an emblem (saith Austin) of Christ's monarchical power conquering and triumphing over his enemies. If we are on God's side, we are on the strongest side; he can with a word destroy his enemies, Ps. ii. 5. 'Then shall he speak to them in his wrath.' Nay, he can with a look destroy them, Job xl. 12. 'Look upon every one that is proud, and bring him low.' It needs cost God no more to confound those who rise up against him, than a look, a cast of his eye, Exod. xiv. 24. 'In the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, thro' the pillar of fire, and troubled their host, and took off their chariot wheels.' What wisdom is it then to have this King to be ours? Then we are on the strongest side.

*Use 2. Of Exhortation.*

*Branch 1.* If God be so glorious a King, full of power and majesty, let us trust in him, Psalm ix. 10. 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' Trust him with your soul; you cannot put this jewel in safer hands. And trust him with church and state affairs: he is King, Exod. xvi. 5. 'The Lord is a man of war.' He can make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. If means fail, he is never at a loss; there are no impossibilities with him; he can make the dry bones live, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. As a king he can command, and as a king he can create salvation, Isaiah lxxv. 18. 'I create Jerusalem a rejoicing.' Let us trust all our affairs with this great King. Either God can remove mountains or he can leap over them. Canticles ii. 8.

*Branch 2.* If God be so great a King, let us fear him, Jer. v. 22. 'Fear ye not me: saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?' We have enough of fear of men. Fear makes danger appear greater, and sin less; but let us fear the King of kings, who hath power to cast body and soul into hell, Luke xii. 5. As one wedge drives out another, so the fear of God would drive out all base carnal fear. Let us fear that God, whose throne is set above all kings; they may be mighty, but he is

almighty. Kings have no power, but what God hath given them; their power is limited, his is infinite. Let us fear this King, whose eyes 'are as lamps of fire,' Rev. i. 14. 'The mountains quake at him; and the rocks are thrown down by him;' Nahum i. 6. If he stamps with his foot, all the creatures are presently up in a battalia to fight for him. O tremble and fear before this God: fear is *janitor animæ*, it is the door-keeper of the soul. It keeps sin from entering, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

*Branch 3.* If God be so glorious a King, he hath *jus vitæ necis*, he hath the power of life and death in his hand. Let all the potentates of the earth take heed, how they employ their power against the King of heaven: they employ their power against God who with their sceptre beat down his truth, which is the most orient pearl of his crown; who crush and persecute his people, who are the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. Who trample upon his laws and royal edicts, which he hath set forth, Psalm ii. 3. What is a king without his laws? Let all those that are invested with worldly power and grandeur, take heed how they oppose the King of glory: the Lord will be too hard for all that come against him, Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God?' wilt thou measure arms with the Almighty? Shall a little child go to fight with an archangel? Ezek. xxii. 14. 'Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?' Christ will put all his enemies at last under his feet, Pf. cx. 1. All the multitude of the wicked, who set themselves against God shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by him till their blood come forth. The King of glory will come off victor at last: men may set up their standard, but God always sets up his trophies of victory. The Lord hath a golden sceptre, and an iron rod, Pf. ii. 9. Those who will not bow to the one, shall be broken by the other.

*Branch 4.* Is God so great a King, having all power in heaven and earth in his hand? Let us learn subjection to him. Such as have gone on in sin, and by their impieties hung out a flag of defiance against the King of heaven, oh come in quickly, and make your peace, submit to God, Pf. ii. 12. 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.' Kiss Christ with a kiss of love, and a kiss of obedience: obey the King of heaven, when he speaks to you by his ministers and ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. When God bids you flee from sin, and espouse holiness, obey him; to obey is better than sacrifice. "To obey God (saith Luther) is better than to work miracles." Obey God willingly, Isa. i. 19. That is the best obedience, that is cheerful, &c; that is the sweetest honey which drops out of the comb: obey God swiftly, Zech. v. 9. 'I lift up mine eyes, and behold two women,

and the wind was in their wings.' Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness; such should our obedience to God be. Obey the King of glory.

*Uſe III.* Comfort to thoſe who are the ſubjects of the King of heaven; God will put forth all the royal power for their ſuccour and comfort.

1. The King of heaven will plead their cauſe, Jer. li. 36. 'I will plead thy cauſe, and take vengeance for thee.'

2. He will protect his people: he ſets an inviſible guard about them, Zech. ii. 5. 'I will be a wall of fire to her round about.' A wall, that is deſenſive; a wall of fire, that is offenſive.

3. When it may be for the good of his people, he will raiſe up deliverance to them, 1 Chron. xi. 4. 'The Lord ſaved them by a great deliverance.' God reigning as a King, can ſave any way: by contemptible means, the blowing of trumpets, and blazing of lamps, Judges vii. 20. By contrary means, he made the ſea a wall to Iſrael, and the waters were a means to keep them from drowning. The fiſh's belly was a ſhip in which Jonah ſailed ſafe to ſhore. God will never want ways of ſaving his people; rather than fail, the very enemies ſhall do his work, 2 Chron. xx. 23. He ſet Ammon and Mount Seir one againſt another. And as God will deliver his people from temporal danger, ſo from ſpiritual, from ſin, and from hell; 'Jeſus hath delivered us from the wrath to come,' 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

*Uſe IV.* Terror to the enemies of the church. If God be King, he will ſet his utmoſt ſtrength againſt them who are the enemies of his kingdom, Pf. xcvi. 3. 'A fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies round about.'

1. He will ſet himſelf againſt his enemies; he will ſet his attributes againſt them, his power and juſtice; and, 'Who knows the power of his anger?' Pf. xc. 11.

2. God will ſet his creatures againſt them, Judges v. 20. The ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera. Tertullian obſerves, that, the Perſians fighting againſt the Chriſtians, a mighty wind aroſe, which did make the Perſians' arrows to fly back in their own faces. Every creature hath a quarrel with a ſinner: the ſtone out of the wall, Hab. ii. 11. The hail and the froſt, Pf. lxxviii. 47. 'He deſtroyed their vines with hail, and their ſycamore-trees with froſt.'

3. God will ſet men againſt themſelves. 1. He will ſet conſcience againſt them: and how terrible is this rod when turned into a ſerpent! Melancthon calls it *Erynnis conſcientia*, a heliſh fury; it is called *vermis conſcientia*, the worm of conſcience. Mark ix. 44. What a worm did Spira feel in his conſcience? He was a terror to himſelf: the worſt civil wars are between a man and his conſcience. 2. God will ſet the diſeaſes of men's



bodies against them, 2 Chron. xxi. 18. 'The Lord smote Jehoram in his bowels, with an incurable disease.' God can raise an army against a man, out of his own bowels : he can set one humour of the body against another : the heat to dry up the moisture, and the moisture to drown the heat : the Lord needs not go far for instruments to punish the sinner ; he can make the joints of the same body to finite one against another, as Dan. v. 6. 3. God will set men's friends against them ; where they used to have honey, they shall have nothing but aloes and wormwood. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he shall make his enemies to be his friends,' Prov. xvi. 7. But when he opposeth God, he maketh his friends to be his enemies. Commodus the emperor, his own wife gave him poison in perfumed wine. Sennacherib's two sons were the death of him, 2 Kings xix. 37. 4. God will set Satan against him, Ps. cix. 6. 'Let Satan stand at his right hand.' What doth Satan at the sinners elbows ? 1. He helps him to contrive sin. 2. He tempts him to commit sin. 3. He terrifies him for sin. He that hath Satan thus standing at his right hand, is sure to be set at God's left hand. Here is the misery of such as oppose God's royal sceptre, he will set every thing in the world against them : if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, sinners shall not be unpunished.

*Use last,* If God be such an absolute monarch, and crowned with such glory and majesty, let us all engage in his service, and stand up for his truth and worship ; dare to own God in the worst time : he is King of kings, and is able to reward all his servants : we may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him. We are ready to say, as Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 9. 'What shall I do for the hundred talents ?' If I appear for God, I may lose my estate, my life : I say with the prophet, God is able to give you much more than this ; he can give you, for the present, inward peace, and for the future a crown of glory which fades not away.

*Qu. What kingdom doth Christ mean here ?*

*Ans. Negat.* 1. He doth not mean a political or earthly kingdom. The apostles indeed did desire, 1. Christ's temporal reign, Acts i. 6. 'When wilt thou restore the kingdom to Israel ?' but Christ said, his kingdom was not of this world, John xviii. 36. So that, when Christ taught his disciples to pray, 'thy kingdom come,' He did not mean it of an earthly kingdom, that he should reign here in outward pomp and splendor. It is not meant of God's providential kingdom, Ps. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all ;' that is, the kingdom of his providence. This kingdom we do not pray for, when we say, 'thy kingdom come ;' for this kingdom is already come ; God exerciseth the kingdom of his providence in the world,

Pf. lxxv. 7. 'He putteth down one and setteth up another.' Nothing stirs in the world but God hath an hand in it : he sets every wheel a-working : he humbles the proud, and raiseth the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes, 1 Sam. ii. 8. The kingdom of God's providence ruleth over all ; kings do nothing but what his providence permits and orders, Acts iv. 27. This kingdom of God's providence we do, What kingdom then is meant here, when we say, 'Thy kingdom come?' *Ans.* Positively. There is a twofold kingdom meant here. 1. The kingdom of grace, which kingdom God exerciseth in the consciences of his people : this is *regnum Dei* MIKRON. God's lesser kingdom. Luke v. 3. When we pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' 1. Here is something tacitly implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness. 1. We pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness. 2. That the devil's kingdom in the world may be demolished. 2. Something positively intended, *adveniat regnum gratiae et gloriae*. 1. We pray, that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts and increased. 2. When we pray 'Thy kingdom come ;' we pray, that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in God's good time be translated into it. These two kingdoms of grace and glory, differ not specifically, but gradually ; they differ not in nature, but only in degree. The kingdom of grace is nothing but the inchoation or beginning of the kingdom of glory : the kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower : the kingdom of grace is glory in the day-break, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian ; the kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one kingdom but by the other. At Athens there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honour ; and there was no going into the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue : so the kingdoms of grace and glory are so close joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory, but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after grace ; but these two, which God hath joined together, may not be put asunder : the kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory.

1. I begin with the first thing implied in this petition, 'Thy kingdom come : ' it is implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness ; and we pray, that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness : the state of nature is a kingdom of darkness : it is a kingdom ; sin is said to reign, Rom. vi. 12. And it is a kingdom of darkness : it is called the power of darkness, Col. i. 16. Man, before the fall, was illuminated with perfect

knowledge, but this light is now eclipsed, and he is fallen into the kingdom of darkness,

*Qu. How many ways is a natural man in the kingdom of darkness?*

*Ans.* 1. He is under the darkness of ignorance, Eph. iv. 18. 'Having the understanding darkened.' Ignorance is a black veil drawn over the mind: men by nature may have a deep reach in the things of the world, but ignorant in the things of God. Nahath the Ammonite would make a covenant with Israel to thrust out their right eyes, 1 Sam. xi. 2. Since the fall, our left hand remains, a deep insight into worldly matters; but our right eye is thrust out, we have no saving knowledge of God; something we know by nature, 'but nothing as we ought to know,' 1 Cor. viii. 2. Ignorance draws the curtains round about the soul, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2. A natural man is under the darkness of pollution: hence sinful actions are called 'works of darkness,' Rom. xiii. 12. Pride and lust darken the glory of the soul; a sinner's heart is a dark conclave, it looks blacker than hell.

3. A natural man is under the darkness of misery: he is exposed to divine vengeance; and the sadness of this darkness, is, that men are not sensible of it; they are blind, yet they think they see; the darkness of Egypt was such thick darkness as 'might be felt,' Exod. x. 21. Men are by nature in thick darkness, but here is the misery: the darkness cannot be felt; they will not believe they are in the dark, till they are past recovery.

*Use I.* See what the state of nature is, 'it is a kingdom of darkness,' and it is a bewitching darkness, John iii. 17. 'Men loved darkness rather than light.' As the Atlantes in Ethiopia curse the sun. Such as are still in the kingdom of darkness, tremble to think of this condition: 'this darkness of sin leads to the chains of darkness.' Jude 6. What comfort can such take in earthly things? The Egyptians might have food, gold, silver; but they could take but little comfort in them, while they were in such darkness as might be felt: so the natural man may have riches and friends to delight in, yet he is in the kingdom of darkness, and how dead are all these comforts? Thou, who art in the kingdom of darkness, knowest not whither thou goest. As the ox is driven to the threshing, but he knows not whither he goes, so the devil is driving thee before him to hell, but thou knowest not whither thou goest. Shouldest thou die in thy natural estate, while thou art in the kingdom of darkness, blackness of darkness is reserved for thee, Jude 13. 'To whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever.'

*Use II.* Let us pray that God will bring us out of this kingdom of darkness. God's kingdom of grace cannot come into

our hearts, till first we are brought out of the kingdom of darkness, 1 Coloss. i. 13. Why should not we strive to get out of this kingdom of darkness? Who would desire to stay in a dark dungeon? O fear the chains of darkness, Jude 6. These chains are God's power, binding men as in chains under wrath for ever. O pray that God will deliver us out of the kingdom of darkness. 1. Be sensible of thy dark damned estate, that thou hast not one spark of fire to give thee light. 2. Go to Christ to enlighten thee, Ephes. v. 14. 'Christ shall give thee light:' he will not only bring thy light to thee, but open thine eyes to see it. That is the first thing implied, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness.

The second thing implied in 'thy kingdom come,' we do implicitly pray against the devil's kingdom, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be demolished in the world. Satan's kingdom stands in opposition to Christ's kingdom; and when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' we pray against Satan's kingdom. Satan hath a kingdom; he got his kingdom by conquest; he conquered mankind in paradise. He hath his throne, Rev. ii. 13. 'Thou dwellest where Satan's throne is.' And his throne is set up in the hearts of men; he doth not care for their purses but their hearts, Ephes. ii. 2. Satan is served upon the knee, Rev. xiii. 4. 'They worship the dragon,' that is, the devil. Satan's empire is very large; the most kingdoms in the world pay tribute to him. Satan's kingdom hath two qualifications or characters.

(1.) It is *regnum nequitiae*, a kingdom of impiety.

(2.) It is *regnum servitutis*, a kingdom of slavery. 1. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of impiety: nothing but sin goes on in his kingdom, murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division are the constant trade driven in Satan's kingdom: Satan is called the unclean spirit, Luke xi. 24. What else is propagated in his kingdom, but a mystery of iniquity?

2. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of slavery: Satan makes all his subjects slaves! *Peccati reus dura daemonis tyrannide tenetur*, Muis. Satan is an usurper and a tyrant; he is a worse tyrant than any other. 1. Other tyrants do but rule over the body, but Satan's kingdom rules over the soul; Satan rides some men as we do horses. 2. Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves: though they make them work in the galleys, yet they give them meat, and let them have their hours for rest; but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he gives his slaves poison instead of meat, he gives them hurtful lusts to feed on, 1 Tim. vi. 9. nor will he let his slaves have any rest, he hires them out in doing his drudgery, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' When the devil had entered into Judas, he sends

him to the high priests, and from thence to the garden, and never let him rest till he had betrayed Christ, and hanged himself. Thus Satan is the worst tyrant; when men have served him to their utmost strength, he will welcome them to hell with fire and brimstone.

*Use.* Let us pray that Satan's kingdom set up in the world may be thrown down. It is sad to think, that though the devil's kingdom be so bad, yet that it should have so many to support it. Satan hath more to stand up for his kingdom, than Christ hath for his. What a large harvest of souls hath Satan? And God only a few gleanings. The Pope and the Turk give their power to Satan. If in God's visible church the devil hath so many loyal subjects, that serve him with their lives and souls, then how do his subjects swarm in places of idolatry and paganism, where there is none to oppose him, but all vote on the devil's side? Men are willingly slaves to Satan; they will fight and die for him: therefore Satan is not only called the 'prince of this world,' John xix. 30. but the 'god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. to shew what power Satan hath over men's souls. O let us pray, that God will break the sceptre of the devil's kingdom, that Michael may destroy the dragon, that by the help of a religious magistracy and ministry, the hellish kingdom of the prince of darkness may be beaten down. Satan's kingdom must be thrown down before Christ's kingdom can flourish in its power and majesty.

2. When we pray, 'Thy kingdom come:' here is something positively intended.

1. We pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts, and increased.

2. That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's due time, be translated into it.

I begin with the first, the kingdom of grace. When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' we pray, 1. That the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts: This is *regnum Dei*, God's lesser kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is righteousness,' Luke xvii. 21. 'The kingdom of God is within you.'

Qu. 1. *Why is grace called a kingdom?*

*Ans.* Because, when grace comes, there is a kingly government set up in the soul. Grace rules the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ: Grace doth king it in the soul; it sways the sceptre, it subdues mutinous lusts, and keeps the soul in a spiritual *decorum*.

Qu. 2. *Why is there such need that we should pray that this kingdom of grace may come into our hearts?*

*Ans.* 1. Because, till the kingdom of grace come, we have no right to the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is sweet-

ened with love, bespangled with promises ; the covenant of grace is our *magna charta*, by virtue of which God passeth himself over to us to be our God : But who are heirs of the covenant of grace ? Only such as have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, Ezekiel xxvi. 26. ‘ A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ;’ there is the kingdom of grace set up in the soul : then it follows, ver. 28. ‘ I will be your God.’ The covenant of grace is to an ungracious person a sealed fountain ; it is kept as a paradise with a flaming sword, that the sinner may not touch it ; without grace you have no more right to it than a farmer to the city-charter.

2. Unless the kingdom of grace be set up in our hearts, our purest offerings are defiled : they may be good as to the matter, but not as to the manner ; they want that which should meliorate and sweeten them. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, did carry a piece of holy flesh in his shirt, the holy flesh could not cleanse him, but he polluted that, Hag. ii. 12. - Till the kingdom of grace be in our hearts, ordinances do not purify us, but we pollute them ; the prayer of an ungracious person becomes sin, Prov. xv. 8. In what a sad condition is a man before God’s kingdom of grace be set up in his heart ! whether he comes or comes not to the ordinance, he sins : if he doth not come to the ordinance, he is a contemner of it : if he doth come he is a polluter of it : a sinner’s works are *opera mortua*, dead works, Heb. i. 6. and those works which are dead cannot please God ; a dead flower hath no sweetness.

3. We had need pray that the kingdom of grace may come, because till this kingdom come into our hearts, we are loathsome in God’s eyes, Zech. xi. 8. ‘ My soul loathed them.’ *Quanta est seditas vitiosae mentis*, Tully. An heart void of grace looks blacker than hell ; sin transforms one into a devil, John vi. 70. ‘ Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil ?’ Envy is the devil’s eye, hypocrisy is his cloven foot : thus it is before the kingdom of grace come. So deformed is a graceless person, that when once he sees his own filth and leprosy, the first thing he doth is to loath himself, Ezek. xx. 43. ‘ Ye shall loath yourself in your own sight for all your evils.’ I have read of a woman, who always used flattering glasses ; by chance, seeing her face in a true glass, *in insaniam delapsa, est*, she ran mad. Such as now dress themselves by the flattering glass of presumption, when once God gives them a sight of their filthiness, they will abhor themselves : ‘ Ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.’

4. Before the kingdom of grace comes into us, we are spiritually illegitimate, of the bastard-brood of the old serpent, John viii. 44. To be illegitimate is the greatest infamy, Deut. xxiii. 2. ‘ A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord

to the tenth generation.' He was to be kept out of the holy assemblies of Israel as an infamous creature : a bastard, by the law, cannot inherit. Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, a person is to God as one illegitimate, and so continuing, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

5. Before the kingdom of grace be set up in men's hearts, the kingdom of Satan is set up in them : they are said to be under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. Satan commands the will : though he cannot force the will, he can, by his subtil temptations, draw it : The devil is said to take ' men captive at his will,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. The Greek word signifies, to take them alive, as the fowler doth the bird in the snare. The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house, Matth. xii. 44. ' I will go to my house.' It is *officina diaboli*, Satan's shop, where he works, Eph. ii. 2. ' The prince of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience.' The members of the body are the tools which Satan works with : Satan possesseth men. In Christ's time many had their bodies possessed, but it is far worse to have their souls possessed : one is possessed with an unclean devil, another with a revengeful devil. No wonder the ship goes full sail when the wind blows ; no wonder men go full sail in sin, when the devil, the prince of the air, blows them : Thus it is ; till the kingdom of grace come, men are under the power of Satan, who, like Draco, writes all his laws in blood.

6. Till the kingdom of grace comes, a man lies exposed to the wrath of God ; ' and who knows the power of his anger ?' Psalm xc. 11. If, when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what then will it be, when God stirs up all his anger ? So inconceivably torturing is God's wrath, that the wicked call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from it, Rev. vi. 1. The hellish torments are compared to a fiery lake, Rev. xx. 15. Other fire is but painted in comparison of this : and this lake of fire burns for ever, Mark ix. 44. God's breath kindles this fire, Isaiah xxx. 22. And, where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it ? Time will not finish it ; tears will not quench it. To this fiery lake are men exposed, till the kingdom of grace be set up in them.

7. Till the kingdom of grace come, men cannot die with comfort ; only he who takes Christ in the arms of his faith, can look death in the face with joy. But it is sad to have the kingdom of terrors in the body, and not the kingdom of grace in the soul. It is a wonder every graceless person doth not die distracted : what will a grace-despiser do, when death comes to him with a writ of habeas corpus ? Hell follows death, Rev. vi. 8. ' Behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed him.' Thus you see what need we

have to pray that the kingdom of grace may come. He that dies without Christ, I may say as Christ, Matt. xxviii. 24. 'It had been good for that man, he had not been born.' Few do believe the necessity of having the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, as appears by this, because they are so well content to live without it. Doth that man believe the necessity of a pardon, that is content to be without it? Most people, if they may have trading, and may sit quietly under their vine and fig-trees, they are in their kingdom, though they have not the kingdom of God within them. If the candle of prosperity shine upon their head, they care not whether the grace of God shine in their hearts: do these men believe the necessity of grace? Were they convinced how needful it were to have the kingdom of God within them, they would cry out as the Jailor, Acts xvi. 3. 'What shall I do to be saved?'

Q<sup>n</sup>. 3. *How may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?*

*Ans.* It concerns us to examine this; our salvation depends upon it; and we had need be curious in the search, because there is something looks like grace, which is not, Gal. vi. 3. 'If a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.' Many think they have the kingdom of grace come into their heart, and it is only a chimera, a golden dream. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendat ad infera!* Aug. Zeuxis did paint grapes so lively, that he deceived the living birds. There are many deceits about grace.

*Deceit 1.* Men think they have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, because they have the means of grace; they live where the silver trumpet of the gospel sounds, they are lift up to heaven with ordinances, Judges xvii. 13. 'I have a Levite to my priest,' sure I shall go to heaven. The Jews cried, Jer. viii. 4. 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;' we are apt to glory in this, the oracles of God are committed to us, we have word and sacrament. Alas! this is a fallacy; we may have the means of grace, yet the kingdom of grace may not be set up in our hearts; we may have the kingdom of God come nigh us, Luke xi. 20. but not into us; the sound of the word in our ears, but not the favour of it in our hearts. Many of the Jews, who had Christ for their preacher, were never the better: hot clothes will not put warmth into a dead man. Thou mayest have hot clothes, warm and lively preaching, yet be spiritually dead, Mat. vii. 12. 'The children of the kingdom shall be cast out.'

*Deceit 2.* Men think they have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, because they have some common works of the spirit.

(1.) They have great enlightenings of mind, profound know-



ledge, and almost speak like angels dropped from heaven : but the apostle supposeth a case, that after men have been enlightened they may fall away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

Qu. *But wherein doth this illumination come short ?*

Ans. The illumination of hypocrites is not virtual, it doth not leave an impression of holiness behind ; it is like weak physic, that will not work. The mind is enlightened, but the heart is not renewed. A Christian that is all head, but no feet, he doth not walk in the ways of God.

(2.) Men have had convictions and stirrings of conscience for sin, they have seen the evil of their ways, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come ; but, I say, convictions, though they are a step towards grace, yet they are not grace. Had not Pharaoh and Judas convictions ? Exod. x. 16.

Qu. *What makes convictions prove abortive ? Wherein is the defect ?*

Ans. 1. They are not deep enough : a sinner never saw himself lost without Christ : the seed that wanted depth of earth withered, Mat. xiii. 5. These convictions are like blossoms blown off before they come to maturity. 2. These convictions are involuntary ; the sinner doth what he can to stifle these convictions ; he drowns them in wine and mirth ; he labours to get rid of them : as the deer, when it is shot runs and shakes out the arrow, so doth he the arrow of conviction : or as the prisoner that files off his fetters, and breaks loose ; so a man breaks loose from his convictions. His corruptions are stronger than his convictions.

(3.) Men have had some kind of humiliation, and have shed tears for their sins, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come into their hearts. But this is no infallible sign of grace ; Saul wept, Ahab humbled himself.

Qu. *Why is not humiliation grace ? Wherein doth it come short ?*

Ans. 1. Tears in the wicked do not spring from love to God, but are forced by affliction, Gen. iv. 13. as water that drops from the still is forced by the fire. The tears of sinners are forced by God's fiery judgments. 2. They are deceitful tears *lachrymæ mentiri doctæ* ; men weep, yet go on in sin ; they do not drown their sins in their tears.

(4) Men have begun some reformation, therefore sure now the kingdom of grace is come ; but there may be deceit in this ; 1. A man may leave his oaths and drunkenness, yet still be in love with sin ; he may leave his sin out of fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury, but still his heart goes after it, Hos. iv. 8. ' They set their hearts on their iniquity ; ' as Lot's wife left Sodom, but still her heart was in Sodom. Hypocrites are like the snake which casts her coat, but keeps her poison :

they keep the love of sin, as one that hath been long suitor to another; though his friends break off the match, yet still he hath a hankering love to her. 2. It may be a partial reformation; he may leave off one sin, and live in another; he may refrain drunkenness, and live in covetousness; he may refrain swearing, and live in the sin of flandering; one devil may be cast out, and another as bad may come in his room. 3. A man may forsake gross sins, but have no reluctancy against heart-sins: *motus primo primi*, proud, lustful thoughts; though he damns up the stream, he lets alone the fountain. O therefore if there be so many deceits, and men may think the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, when it is not, how curious and critical had we need be in our search, whether we have the kingdom of grace really come into our hearts? If a man be deceived in the title of his land, it is but the loss of his estate; but if be deceived about his grace, it is the loss of his soul. I should now come to answer this question, how may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?

Qu. *How may we know the kingdom of grace is set up in us?*

Ans. 1. In general, by having a metamorphosis or change wrought in the soul; this is called the 'new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The faculties are not new, but there is a new nature; as the strings of a lute are the same, but the tune is altered. When the kingdom of grace is set up, there is light in the mind, order in the affections, pliability of the will, tenderness in the conscience; such as can find no change of heart, they are the same as they were; as vain, as earthly, as unclean as ever; there is no sign of God's kingdom of grace in them.

2. More particularly we may know the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts, 1. By having unfeigned desires after God; this is the smoking flax Christ will not quench. A true desire of grace, is grace; by the beating of this pulse, conclude there is life, Neh. i. 11. 'O Lord let thy ear be attentive to the prayers of thy servants who desire to fear thy name.' But may not an hypocrite have good desires? Num. xxiii. 10. 'Let me die the death of the righteous.' Therefore, I say, unfeigned desires evidence the kingdom of God within a man.

Qu. *But how may these unfeigned desires be known?*

Ans. 1. An unfeigned desire is ingenuous; we desire God *propter se*, for himself, for his intrinsical excellencies, and the orieny of his beauty which shines; the favour of Christ's ointments (*i. e.*) his graces, draw the virgin's desires after him. Cant. i. 3. A true saint desires Christ not only for what he hath, but for what he is; not only for his rewards, but for his holiness. No hypocrite can thus desire God; he may desire him for his jewels, but not for his beauty.

2. An unfeigned desire is unsatiable, it cannot be satisfied without God : let the world heap her honours and riches, they will not satisfy. Not flowers or music will content him who is thirsty ; nothing will quench the soul's thirst but the blood of Christ ; he faints away, his heart breaks with longing for God, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. and cxix. 20.

3. An unfeigned desire is active, it flourisheth into endeavour, Isa. xxvi. 9. ' With my soul have I desired thee, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' A soul that desires aright faith, Christ I must have, grace I must have, I will have heaven, though I take it by storm ; he who desires water, will let down the bucket into the well to draw it up.

4. An unfeigned desire is superlative : we desire Christ, not only more than the world, but more than heaven, Pl. lxxiii. 25. ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ?' Heaven itself would not satisfy without Christ ; Christ is the diamond in the ring of glory ; if God should say to the soul I will put thee into heaven, but I will hide my face from thee, I will draw a curtain between, that thou shalt not behold my glory ; the soul would not be satisfied, but say as Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. ' Now therefore let me see the king's face.'

5. An unfeigned desire is gradual : it increaseth as the sun in the horizon ; a little of God will not satisfy, but the pious soul desireth still more ; a drop of water is not enough for the thirsty traveller. Though a Christian is thankful for the least degree of grace, yet he is not satisfied with the greatest ; still he thirsts for more of Christ, and his Spirit. Desire is an holy dropsy : a saint would have more knowledge, more sanctity, more of Christ's presence. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of an ordinance is sweet ; and now the soul will never leave longing till it sees him face to face. He desires to have grace perfected in glory. *Dulcissimo Deo totas immergi cupit et inviscerari* ; we would be swallowed up in God, and be ever bathing ourselves in those perfumed waters of pleasure, which run at his right-hand for ever. Sure this unfeigned desire after God is a blessed sign that the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, the beating of this pulse shews life, *Est a Deo ut bene velimus*, Aug. If iron move upwards contrary to its nature it is a sign some loadstone hath been there drawing it ; if the soul move towards God in an unfeigned desire, it is a sign the loadstone of the Spirit hath been drawing it. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the princely grace of faith. *Fides est sanctissima humani pectoris, Gemma*.—Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature ; and ingrafts us into Christ ; faith is the vital artery of the soul, Heb. x. 38. ' The just shall live by faith.' Faith makes an holy adventure on Christ's merits ; when this faith, as a prince-

ly grace reigns in the soul, now the kingdom of God is come unto us. The Hebrew word for faith comes from a *radix*, which signifies a nourish; faith nourisheth the soul, and is the nurse of all the graces. But, who will not say he is a believer? Simon Magus believed, Acts viii. 13. Yet was in the gall of bitterness. The hypocrite can put on faith's mantle. As the Devil did Samuel's. How shall we know therefore that our faith is sound, that it is the faith of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. And so that the kingdom of God is within us?

*Ans.* 1. True faith is wrought by the ministry of the word, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith comes by hearing.' Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. Let us examine how was our faith wrought? Did God in the ministry of the word humble us? Did he break up the fallow ground of our heart, and then cast in the seed of faith? A good sign, but, if you know not how you came by your faith, suspect yourselves: as we suspect men to have stolen goods, when they know not how they came by them.

2. True faith is at first minute and small, like a grain of mustard seed; it is full of doubts and fears, it is smoking flax; it smoaks with desire, but doth not flame with comfort; it is so small that a Christian can hardly discern whether he hath faith or not.

3. True faith is long in working, *non fit instanti*—it costs many searchings of heart, many prayers and tears; there is a spiritual combat: the soul suffers many sore pangs of humiliation before the child of faith be born. They whose faith is *per saltum*, they leap out of sin into a confidence that Christ is theirs: I say, as Isaac concerning his son's venison, Gen. xxvii. 20. 'How is it that thou hast found it so quickly?' How is it that thou comest by thy faith so soon? The seed in the parable which sprung up suddenly withered, Mark iv. 5. *Solent praeococa synito stacessere.*

4. True faith is joined with sanctity; as a little bezoar is strong in operation, and a little musk sweetens; so a little faith purifies, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Faith, though it doth but touch Christ, fetcheth an healing virtue from him. Justifying faith doth that, in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth; it removes the mountains of sin, and casts them into the sea of Christ's blood.

5. True faith will trust God with a pawn. 'Tho' a Christian cut short in provisions, the fig-tree doth not blossom, yet he will trust in God: *Fides famem non formidat*.—Faith fears not famine. God hath given us his promise as his bond, Pl. xxxvii. 3. 'Verily thou shalt be fed.' Faith puts this bond in fait: God will rather work a miracle, than his promise shall fail. He hath cause to suspect his faith, who faith, he trusts God for the

greater, but dares not trust him for the lesser ; he trusts God for salvation, but dares not trust him for a livelihood.

6. True faith is prolific, it brings forth fruit ; faith hath Rachel's beauty, and Leah's fruitfulness. *Fides pinguescit operibus*, Luther. Faith is full of good works. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe ; faith is the spouse-like grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears. By having such a faith, we may know the kingdom of God is within us ; grace is certainly in our hearts.

3. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the noble grace of love : faith and love are the two poles on which all religion turns, Cant. i. 4. ' The upright love thee.' True love is to love God out of choice : love turns the soul into a seraphim ; it makes it burn in a flame of affection : love is the truest touchstone of sincerity : love is the queen of the graces, it commands the whole soul, 2 Cor. v. 4. If our love to God be genuine and real, we let him have the supremacy ; we set him in the highest room of our soul ; we give him the purest of our love, Cant. viii. 2. ' I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of the pomegranate.' If the spouse had any thing better than another, a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that : we give the creature the milk of our love, but God the cream. In short, if we love God aright, we love his laws ; we love his picture drawn in the saints, by the pencil of the Holy Ghost ; we love his presence in his ordinances. Sledian faith, That the protestants in France had a church, which they called Paradise ; as if they thought themselves in paradise, while they had God's presence in his sanctuary. The soul that loves God, loves his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It will be a glorious appearing to the saints, when their union with Christ shall be complete, then their joy shall be full. The bride longs for the marriage-day : ' the Spirit and the bride say come : even so come, Lord Jesus,' Rev. xxii. 17. By this sacred love we may know the kingdom of God is within us.

4. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts by spiritualizing the duties of religion, 1 Pet. ii. 5. ' Ye are an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.' Spiritualizing duty consists in three things.

1. Fixedness of mind.
2. Fervency of devotion.
3. Uprightness of aim.

1. Fixedness of mind : Then we spiritualize duty, when our minds are fixed on God, 1 Cor. vii. 35. ' That you may attend on the Lord without distraction.' Tho' impertinent thoughts sometimes come into the heart in duty, yet they are not allow-

ed, Psal. cxix. 13. they come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied, but they are turned out.

2. Fervency of devotion, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' It is a metaphor alludes to water that seethes and boils over; so the affections boil over, the eyes melt in tears, the heart flows in holy ejaculations.—We not only bring our offering to God, but our hearts.

3. Uprightness of aim. A heart that is upright hath three ends in duty: 1. That he may grow more like God: As Moses on the mount had some of God's glory reflected on him, 'his face shined.' 2. That he may have more communion with God, 1 John i. 6. 'our fellowship is with the Father.' 3. That he may bring more glory to God, 1 Pet. iv. 11. Phil. i. 20. 'That Christ may be magnified.' Sincerity aims at God in all; though we shoot short, yet we take a right aim: this is a sure evidence of grace, the spiritualizing duty. The spirits of wine are best, so is the spiritual part of duty. A little spiritualness in duty is better than all the gildings of the temple, or outward pompous worship, which doth so dazzle carnal eyes.

+ 5. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, by our antipathy and opposition against every known sin, Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every false way.' Hatred is [*Gr. prosta gene*, Arist] against the whole kind: hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. A gracious soul not only forsakes sin (as a man forsakes his country never to return to it more) but hates sin; as there is an antipathy between the crocodile and the scorpion. If the kingdom of God be within us, we not only hate sin for hell, but we hate it as hell, as being contrary to God's holiness and our happiness.

1 6. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, when we have given up ourselves to God by obedience: as a servant gives up himself to his master, as a wife gives up herself to her husband, so we give up ourselves to God by obedience: and this obedience is, 1. Free; as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb. 2. Uniform; we obey God in one thing as well as another, Psal. cxix. 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments. A good Christian is like a pair of compasses, one foot of the compass stands upon the centre, and the other foot of it goes round the circle; so a Christian by faith stands on God the centre, and by obedience goes round the circle of God's commandments: a sign the kingdom of grace is not come into the heart, when it doth not reign there by universal obedience. Hypocrites would have Christ to be their saviour; but they pluck the government from his shoulders, they will not have him rule; but he who hath the kingdom of God within him, submits cheerfully to every com-

mand of God: He will do what God will have him do; he will be what God will have him be: he puts a blank paper into God's hand, and saith, "Lord, write what thou wilt, I will subscribe." Blessed is he that can find all these things in his soul, 'He is all glorious within,' Psalm xlv. 13. He carries a kingdom about him, this kingdom of grace will certainly bring to a kingdom of glory.

I shall answer some doubts and objections that a Christian may make against himself.

Obj. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come into my heart.*

Ans. When a Christian is under temptation, or grace lies dormant, he is not fit to be his own judge; but in this case he must take the witness of others who have the spirit of discerning. But let us hear a Christian's objections against himself, why he thinks the kingdom of grace is not yet come into his heart.

Obj. 1. *I cannot discern grace.*

Ans. A child of God may have the kingdom of grace in his heart, yet not know it. The cup was in Benjamin's sack, though he did not know it was there; thou mayest have faith in thy heart, the cup may be in thy sack, though thou knowest it not. Old Jacob wept for his son Joseph, when Joseph was alive; thou mayest weep for want of grace, when grace may be alive in thy heart. The seed may be in the ground, when we do not see it spring up; the seed of God may be sown in thy heart, though thou dost not perceive the springing of it up. Think not grace is lost because it is hid.

Obj. 2. *Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, there must be some preparation for it; the fallow ground of the heart must be broken up: I fear the plough of the law hath not gone deep enough, I have not been humbled enough, therefore I have no grace.*

Ans. God doth not prescribe a just proportion of sorrow and humiliation: the scripture mentions the truth of sorrow, but not the measure. Some are more flagitious sinners than others, these must have a greater degree of humiliation. A knotty piece of timber requires more wedges to be driven into it. Some stomachs are fouler than others, therefore need stronger physic. But wouldst thou know when thou hast been humbled enough for sin?—When thou art willing to let go thy sins. Then the gold hath lien long enough in the furnace, when the dross is purged out; so, when the love of sin is purged out, a soul is humbled enough to divine acceptation, though not to divine satisfaction. Now if thou art humbled enough, (though not so much as others) what needs more? *Frustra fit per plura, &c.*

If a needle will let out the imposthume, what needs a lance? Be not more cruel to thyself than God would have thee.

Obj. 3. *If the kingdom of God were within me, it would be a kingdom of power; it would enable me to serve God with vigour of soul; but I have a spirit of infirmity upon me, I am weak and impotent, and untuned to every holy action.*

Ans. There is a great difference between the weakness of grace, and the want of grace; a man may have life, although he be sick and weak. Weak grace is not to be despised, but cherished; Christ will not break the bruised reed. Do not argue from the weakness of grace to the nullity.

1. Weak grace will give us a title to Christ, as well as strong. A weak hand of faith will receive the alms of Christ's merits.

2. Weak faith is capable of growth. The seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear: the faith that is strongest was once in its infancy. Grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which did rise higher and higher: be not discouraged at thy weak faith; though it be but blossoming, it will by degrees come to more maturity.

3. The weakest grace shall persevere, as well as the strongest. A sucking child was as safe in the ark, as Noah. An infant believer, that is but newly laid to the breast of the promise, is as safe in Christ, as the most eminent heroic saint.

Obj. 4. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come, because I find the kingdom of sin so strong in me. Had I faith, it would purify my heart; but I find much pride, worldliness, passion.*

Ans. The best of the saints have remainders of corruption, Dan. vii. 22. 'They had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season.' So in the regenerate, tho' the dominion of sin be taken away, yet the life of it is prolonged for a season. What pride was there in Christ's own disciples, when they strove which should be greatest? The issue of sin will not be quite stopped till death. The Lord is pleased to let the in-being of sin continue, to humble his people, and make them prize Christ the more; but, because you find corruptions stirring, do not therefore presently unfaint yourselves, and deny the kingdom of grace to be come into your souls. That you feel sin, is an evidence of spiritual life; that you mourn for sin, what are these tears but fruits of love to God? that you have a combat with sin, argues antipathy against it: those sins which you did once wear as a crown on your head, are now as fetters on the leg; is not all this from the spirit of grace in you? sin is in you, as poison in the body, which you are sick of, and use all scripture antidotes to expel. Should we condemn all those who have the indwelling of sin, nay, who have had sin, (at some-



times) prevailing, we should blot some of the best saints out of the Bible.

*Obj. 5. Where the kingdom of grace comes, it softens the heart : but I find my heart frozen and congealed into hardness, I can hardly squeeze out one tear. Do flowers grow on a rock? can there be any grace in such a rocky heart?*

*Ans. 1.* There may be grief where there are no tears; the best sorrow is rational. In your judgment you esteem sin the most hyperbolical evil, you have a disgust and a displacency against sin; this is a rational sorrow, and such as God will accept.

**1.** A Christian may have some hardness in his heart, yet not have an hard heart. A field may have tares in it, yet we call it a field of wheat; in the best heart is a mixture of hardness, yet because there is some softness and melting, God looks upon it as a soft heart: therefore, Christian, dispute not against thyself, if thou canst find but one thing, "That the frame and temper of thy soul be holy." Art thou still breathing after God, delighting in him? is the complexion of thy soul heavenly? canst thou say as David, Psal. cxxxix. 17. 'When I awake, I am still with thee?' As colours laid in oil, or a statue carved in gold, abide, so doth an holy complexion; the soul is still pointing towards God. If it be thus with thee, assure thyself the kingdom of grace is come into the soul; be not unkind to God, to deny any work of his Spirit which he hath wrought in thee.

*Use. I.* Of exhortation. Labour to find that this kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts; while others aspire after heavenly kingdoms, labour to have the kingdom of God within you, Luke xvii. 21. The kingdom of grace must come into us, before we can go into the kingdom of glory. *Motives.*

*1st Motive.* This kingdom of God within us is our spiritual beauty: the kingdom of grace adorns a person, and sets him off in the eyes of God and angels. This makes the king's daughter all glorious within, Pl. xiv. 13. Grace sheds a glory and lustre upon the soul. As the diamond to the ring, so is grace to the soul. An heart beautified with grace, hath the King of heaven's picture hung in it.

*2d Motive.* The kingdom of grace set up in the heart is our spiritual defence. Grace is called the 'Armour of light,' Rom. xiii. 12. It is light for beauty, and armour for defence. He who hath the kingdom of grace within him, is 'strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power,' Col. i. 11. he hath the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast plate of righteousness; this armour can never be shot thro', it fortifies a Christian against the assaults of temptations, and the terrors of hell.

*3d Motive.* The kingdom of grace set up in the heart brings peace with it, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace.' There is a secret peace breeds out of holiness. Peace is the best blessing of a kingdom: *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior.* The kingdom of grace is a kingdom of peace; grace is the root, peace is the flower grows out of it; it is *pax in procella*, such peace that no worldly affliction can shake. The doors of Solomon's temple were made of olive tree, carved with open flowers, 1 Kings vi. 32. in a gracious heart is the olive of peace, and the open flowers of joy.

*4th Motive.* The kingdom of grace enricheth the soul; a kingdom hath its riches. A believer is said to be rich in faith, James iii. 5. How rich is he who hath God for his God, who is heir to all the promises? Heb. vi. 17. A man may be rich in bills and bonds; a believer, tho' he may say as Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none,' Acts iii. 6. yet he is rich in bills and bonds, he is heir to all God's promises; and to be heir to the promises, is better than to be heir to the crown.

*5th Motive.* When the kingdom of grace comes, it doth fix and establish the heart, Ps. lvii. 7. 'O God my heart is fixed.' Before the kingdom of grace comes, the heart is very unfixed and unsettled; like a ship without a ballast, like quicksilver that cannot be made to fix; but when the kingdom of grace comes, it doth *stabilire animum*, it fixeth the heart upon God; and when the heart is fixed, it rests quiet as in its centre.

*6th Motive.* This kingdom of grace is distinguishing; it is a sure pledge of God's love. God may give kingdoms in anger; but wherever the kingdom of grace is set up, it is in love; God cannot give grace in anger. The crown always goes with this kingdom; let us therefore be ambitious of this kingdom of grace.

Qu. *How should we do to obtain this kingdom?*

Ans. 1. In general, take pains for it: we cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have grace? 'If thou seekest her as silver,' Prov. ii. 3. A man may as well expect a crop without sowing, as grace without labour. We must not think to have grace as Israel had manna; they did not plow nor sow, but it was rained down from heaven upon them: No we must *operam dare*, take pains for grace. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat.

2. Let us go to God to set up this kingdom of grace in our hearts; God is called, 'the God of all grace,' 1 Pet. v. 10. Say, Lord, I want this kingdom of grace, I want an humble, believing heart, O enrich me with grace, let thy kingdom come; and be importunate suitors. As Achsah said to her father Caleb, Josh. xv. 19. 'Thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water:' so, Lord, thou hast given me

enough of the world, here is a south land ; but, Lord, give me the upper-springs of grace, let ' thy kingdom come.' What is the venison thou hast given me, without the blessing ? When we are importunate with God, and will take no denial, then he will set up his kingdom within us.

3. Keep close to the word preached ; the word preached is *virga virtutis*, the rod of God's strength ; it is the great engine God useth for the setting up the kingdom of grace in the heart, Rom. x. 17. ' Faith comes by hearing.' Though God could work grace immediately by his Spirit, or by the ministry of angels from heaven, yet he chooseth to work by the word preached ; this is the usual mean, by which he sets up the kingdom of grace in the heart ; and the reason is, because he hath put his divine sanction upon it, he hath appointed it for the means of working grace, and he will honour his own ordinance, 1 Cor. i. 21. What reason could be given why the waters of Damascus should not have as sovereign virtue to heal Naaman's leprosy, as the waters of Jordan ? only this, because God did appoint and sanctify the waters of Jordan to heal and not the others ; therefore let us keep the word preached, because the power of God goes along with it.

*Uſe II.* Such as have this kingdom of God set up in them, it calls for gratulation and thanksgiving : what will you be thankful for, if not for a kingdom ? Grace is the best blessing, it is the result and product of God's electing love : God, in setting up his kingdom of grace, hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens ; for now you are born of God, and of the blood-royal of heaven. O admire and exalt free grace ; make God's praise glorious, Psal. lxxvi. 2. The apostle seldom mentions the work of grace, but he joins praise, Col. i. 12. ' Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' If God hath crowned you with the kingdom of grace, do you crown him with your praises.

2. The second thing intended by our Saviour in this petition is, that the kingdom of grace may increase, that it may come more into us : and this may answer a question.

*Qu.* Why do we pray, ' thy kingdom come,' when the kingdom of grace is already come into the soul ?

*Ans.* Though the kingdom of grace be already come into us, yet still we must pray, ' thy kingdom come ;' namely that grace may be increased, and that this kingdom may flourish still more in our souls. Till we come to live among the angels, we shall need to pray this prayer, ' thy kingdom come ;' Lord, let thy kingdom of grace come in more power into my soul, let grace be more augmented and increased.

*Qu. (1.) When doth the kingdom of grace increase in the soul? When is it a flourishing kingdom?*

*Ans. 1.* When a Christian hath further degrees added to his graces: there is more oil in the lamp, his knowledge is clearer, his love is more enflamed: grace is capable of degrees, and may rise higher as the sun in the horizon. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who 'received the spirit without measure,' John iii. 34. Christ could not be more holy than he was; but our grace is receptive of further degrees, we may have more sanctity, we may add more cubits to our spiritual stature.

1. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath gotten more strength than he had, Job xvii. 9. 'He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' Heb. 'He shall add to his strength.' A Christian hath strength to resist temptation, to forgive his enemies, to suffer affliction. 'Tis not easy to suffer; a man must deny himself before he take up the cross. The way to heaven is like the way which Jonathan and his armour bearer had in climbing up a steep place, 1 Sam. xiv. 4. 'There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other.' It requires much strength to climb up this rocky way. That grace which will carry us through prosperity, will not carry us through sufferings: the ship needs stronger tackling to carry it through a storm than a calm. Now, when we are so strong in grace, that we can bear up under affliction, without murmuring or fainting; here is the kingdom of grace increased. What mighty strength of grace had he, who told the emperor Valentinian, you may take away my life, but you cannot take away my love to the truth.

2. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath most conflict with spiritual corruptions, he not only abstains from gross evils, but hath a combat with inward, hidden, close corruptions: as pride, envy, hypocrisy, vain thoughts, carnal confidence: these are spiritual wickednesses, and do both defile and disturb, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.' Which shews there are two sorts of corruptions, one of the flesh, the other of the spirit. When we grieve for, and combat with spiritual sin (as being the root of all gross sins) now, the kingdom of grace increaseth, and spreads its territories in the soul.

3. Then the kingdom of grace flourisheth, when a Christian hath learned to live by faith, Gal. ii. 2. 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' There is the habit of faith, and the drawing of this habit into exercise: for a Christian to graft his hope of salvation, only upon the stock of Christ's righteousness, and make Christ all in justification; to live on the promises, as a bee on the flower, and suck out the sweetness of them; to trust God where we cannot trace him; to believe his love through a

frown ; to persuade ourselves, when he hath the face of an enemy, yet he hath the heart of a Father ; when we are arrived at this, here is the kingdom of grace flourishing in our souls.

5. When a Christian is arrived at holy zeal, Numb. xxv. 13. Phinehas was zealous for his God. Zeal is the flame of the affections, it turns a faint into a seraphim : a zealous Christian is impotent when God is dishonoured, Rev. ii. 2. He will wrestle with difficulties, he will swim to Christ through a sea of blood, Acts xxi. 13. Zeal loves truth when it is despised, and opposed, Pl. cxix. 126. 'They have made void thy law, therefore I love thy law.'—Here is grace increasing, like the sun in the horizon. Zeal resembles the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 2. 'There appeared cloven tongues like as fire, and sat upon each of them.' Tongues of fire were an emblem of that fire of zeal, which the Spirit poured on them.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian is as well diligent in his particular calling, as devout in his general. He is the wise Christian, that carries things equally ; that doth so live by faith, that he lives in a calling. Therefore it is worth our notice, when the apostle had exhorted the Thessalonians to increase in grace, 1 Thess. iv. 10. He presently adds, ver. 11. 'And that you do your own business, and work with your hands.' This is a sign grace is increasing, when Christians go cheerfully about their calling. Indeed to be all the day in the mount with God, and to have the mind fixed on glory, is more sweet to a man's self, and is an heaven upon earth : but to be conversant in our callings, is more profitable to others. I may allude to that of St. Paul. To be with Christ is best for me ; yet to abide here is needful for you, Phil. i. 24. So, to converse with God in prayer and sweet meditation all the week long, is more for the comfort of a man's own person ; but to be sometimes employed in the business of a calling, is more profitable to the family to which he belongs. It is not good to be like the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. It shews the increase of grace, when the Christian keeps a due *decorum* : he joins piety and industry, when zeal runs forth in religion, and diligence is put forth in a calling.

7. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth when a Christian is established in the belief and love of the truth. The heart by nature is as a ship without ballast, it wavers and fluctuates. Beza writes of one Bolezius, his religion changed as the moon and planet Mercury. Such as are wandering stars, will be falling stars : but when a soul is built on the rock Christ, and no winds of temptation can blow it away, now the kingdom of grace flourisheth. One calls Athanasius, *Adamus Ecclesie*, an invincible adamant, in respect of his stability in the truth, Col.

ii. 7. Rooted and built up in him ; the rooting of a tree evidenceth the growth.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth in a man's own heart, when he labours to be instrumental to set up this kingdom in others. Though it is the greatest benefit to have grace wrought in ourselves, yet it is the greatest honour to be instrumental to work it in others, Gal. iv. 19. 'Of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you.' Such as are masters of a family, should endeavour to see the kingdom of grace set up in their servants ; such as are godly parents, let not God alone by prayer, till you see grace in your children : what a comfort would it be to you, to be both the natural and spiritual fathers of your children ? Austin saith, his mother Monica travailed with greater care and pain for his new birth, than his natural. This shews the increase of grace, when we labour to see the kingdom of grace set up in others ; then the water abounds in the river, when it overflows and runs into the meadows ; then grace increaseth in the soul when it hath influence upon others, and we endeavour their salvation.

Qu. 2. *Wherein appears the needfulness of this, that the kingdom of grace should be increased ?*

Ans. 1. This is God's design in keeping up a standing ministry in the church to increase the kingdom of grace in men's hearts, Eph. iv. 8. 'He gave gifts unto men ;' that is ministerial gifts : why so ? ver. 12. 'For the edifying of the body of Christ.' Not only for conversion, but for augmentation : therefore the word preached is compared not only to feed, but to milk ; because by this breast-milk, God designs our growth in grace.

2. We had need have the kingdom of grace increase, in respect we have a great deal of work to do, and a little grace will hardly carry us through. A Christian's life is laborious, so many temptations to resist, so many promises to believe, so many precepts to obey, that it will require a great deal of grace : A Christian must not only pray, but 'be zealous and repent,' Rev. iii. 19. Not only love, but 'be sick of love,' Cant. ii. 5. How had he need therefore to have the kingdom of grace enlarged in his soul ? As his work increaseth upon him, so his grace had need increase.

3. If the kingdom of grace doth not increase, it will decay, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Grace, for want of increasing, is sometimes like a winter plant, all the sap runs to the root, and it looks as if it were dead, Rev. iii. 2. 'Strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die : ' Though grace cannot expire, it may wither ; and a withering Christian loseth much of his beauty and fragrancy : what great need have we then to pray, 'thy kingdom come,' that this kingdom of grace

may be increased? If grace be not improved, it will soon be impaired. A Christian, for want of increasing his grace, loseth his strength; he is like a sick man, that cannot either walk or work; his prayers are sick and weak; he is as if he had no life in him, his faith can hardly fetch breath, and you can scarce feel the pulse of his love to beat.

4. To have grace increasing, is suitable to Christianity: Christians are called trees of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 3. The saints are not only jewels for sparkling lustre, but trees for growth: they are called the lights of the world, Phil. ii. 15. Light is still increasing. First there is the *crepusculum*, or day-break, and so it shines brighter to the meridian. They who are the lights of the world must increase till they come to the meridian of glory. Not to grow is suspicious; painted things grow not.

5. As the kingdom of grace increaseth, so a Christian's comforts increase. Comfort belongs to the *bene esse*, or well-being of a Christian; it is like sweet meat, delicious to the taste, Ps. xciv. 29. The more grace, the more joy. As the more sap in the root, the more wine in the grape. Who did more increase in grace than David? And who more in consolation, Ps. iv. 7. 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart.' Grace turns to joy, as milk to cream.

Qu. (3.) *How may they be comforted, who bewail their want of growth, and weep that they cannot find the kingdom of grace increase?*

Ans. 1. To see and bewail our decay in grace, argues not only the life of grace, but growth. It is a sign a man recovers and gets strength, when he feels his weakness: it is a step forward in grace, to see our imperfections. The more the spirit shines in the heart, the more evil it discovers; a Christian thinks it worse with him than it was, whereas his grace may not grow lesser, but his light greater.

2. If a Christian doth not increase in one grace, he may in another; if not in knowledge, he may in humility. If a tree doth not grow so much in the branches, it may in the root: to grow downwards in the root, is a good growth.

3. A Christian may grow less in affection, when he grows more in judgment. As a musician when he is old, his fingers are stiff, and not so nimble at the lute as they were, but he plays with more art and judgment than before; so a Christian may not have so much affection in duty as at the first conversion, but he is more solid in religion, and more settled in his judgment than he was before.

4. A Christian may think he doth not increase in grace, because he doth not increase in gifts; whereas there may be a decay of natural parts, the memory, and other faculties, when

there is not a decay of grace. Parts may be impaired, when grace is improved: be not discouraged, it is better to decay in parts, and be enlarged in grace, than to be enlarged in parts, and to decay in grace.

5. A Christian may increase in grace, yet not be sensible of it. The seed may grow in the earth, when we do not perceive it to spring up: the grace may grow in time of desertion, and not be perceived. So I have done with the first thing intended in this petition, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts, and that it may increase and flourish.

I should come to the second thing intended in this petition, 'that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in due time be translated into it.'

When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' here is something positively intended; we pray, (1.) That the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts. (2.) That it may increase and flourish. (3.) That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that God would, in his due time, translate us into it.

1. What this kingdom of glory is.
2. What are the properties of it.
3. Wherein it exceeds all other kingdoms.
4. When this kingdom comes.
5. Wherein appears the certainty of it.
6. Why we should pray for its coming.

*First*, What this kingdom of glory is.

*Ans.* By this kingdom is meant, that glorious estate which the saints shall enjoy, when they shall reign with God and angels for ever. If a man stand upon the sea-shore, he cannot see all the dimensions of the sea, the length, breadth, and depth of it; yet he may see it is of a vast extension: so, though the kingdom of heaven be of that incomparable excellency, that neither tongue of man or angels can express, yet we may conceive of it to be an exceeding glorious thing, such as eye hath not seen.

Concerning the kingdom of heaven I shall shew, (1.) What it implies. (2.) What it imports.

(1.) What it implies.

*Ans.* It implies a blessed freedom from all evil.

2. What it imports.

*Ans.* It imports glorious fruition of all good.

1. What the kingdom of heaven implies.

*Ans.* It implies a freedom from all evil.

1. A freedom from the necessities of nature. We are in this life subject to many necessities; we need food to nourish us, clothes to cover us, armour to defend us, sleep to refresh us; but in the kingdom of heaven there is no need of these things, and it is better not to need them than to have them; and it is



better not to need crutches, than to have crutches. What need will there be of food when our bodies shall be made spiritual? 1 Cor. xv. 44. Though not spiritual for substance, yet for qualities. What need will there be of clothing, when our bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body? What need will there be of armour, when there is no enemy? What need will there be of sleep, when there is no night? Rev. xxii. 5. The saints shall be freed, in the heavenly kingdom, from these necessities of nature to which they now lie exposed.

2. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the imperfections of nature. Since the fall, our knowledge hath suffered an eclipse.

(1.) Our natural knowledge is imperfect, it is chequered with ignorance. There are many hard knots in nature, which we cannot easily untie: why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it? What way the light is parted! Job xxxviii. 24. What is the reason of all the occult qualities, sympathies, and antipathies! He who sees clearest, hath a mist before his eyes. Socrates said on his death-bed, there were many things he had yet to learn. Our ignorance is more than our knowledge.

(2.) Our divine knowledge is imperfect; we know but in part, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. though he had many revelations, and was wrapt up into the third heaven. We have but dark conceptions of the Trinity, Job. xi. 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God?'—Our narrow capacities will no more contain the Trinity; than a little glass-vial will hold all the water in the sea: We cannot unriddle the mystery of the incarnation, the human nature assumed into the person of the Son of God; the human nature not God, yet united with God: We see now in *Aenigmata*, in a glass, darkly; but, in the kingdom of heaven, the veil shall be taken off; all imperfecting of nature shall be done away. When the sun-light of glory shall begin to shine in the heavenly horizon, all dark shadows of ignorance shall fly away, our lamp of knowledge shall burn bright, we shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully.

3. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the toilsome labours of this life; God enacted a law in paradise, 'in the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat bread,' Gen. iii. 9. There is the labour of the hand in manufacture, and the labour of the mind in study, Eccl. i. 8. 'All things are full of labour,' but in the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from our labours.

1. There needs no labour, when a man hath got to the haven; he hath no more need of sailing. In heaven there needs no labour, because the saints shall have that glory which they laboured for.

2. There shall be no labour, Rev. xiv. 13. 'They rest from

their labours.' As God, when he had finished the work of creation, rested from his labours, Gen. ii. 2. So, when the saints have finished the work of sanctification, they rest from their labours. Where should there be rest, but in the heavenly centre? Not that this sweet rest in the kingdom of heaven excludes all motion, for spirits cannot be idle; but the saints glorified shall rest from all wearisome employment; it shall be a labour full of ease, a motion full of delight; the saints in heaven shall love God, and what labour is that? Is it any labour to love beauty? They shall praise God, and that sure is delightful: When the bird sings, it is not so much a labour as a pleasure.

3. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from original corruption: This is *causa causati*, the root of all actual sin. There would be no actual sin, if there were no original; there would be no water in the stream, if there were none in the fountain. Original sin is incorporated into our nature; it is as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted. This makes a Christian weary of his life; he offends that God whom he loves. What would a Christian give to have his chains taken off, to be rid of vain thoughts? How did St. Paul (that bird of paradise) bemoan himself for his sins? Rom. vii. 22. We cannot act either our duties or our graces without sin. The soul that is most refined and clarified by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption; but in the kingdom of heaven the fountain of original sin shall be quite dried up what a blessed time will that be, never to grieve God's spirit more! In heaven are virgin-souls; there is beauty which is not stained with lust: Nothing enters there that defiles, Rev. xxi. 27.

4. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from all sorrows, Rev. xxi. 4. 'There shall be no more sorrow,' Our life here is interlarded with trouble, Psalm xxxi. 10. Either losses grieve, or law-suits vex, or unkindness breaks the heart. We may as well separate moisture from air, or weight from lead, as troubles from man's life. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?* Aug. But, in the kingdom of heaven, sorrow and sighing shall fly away. Here the saints sit by the rivers weeping, but one smile from Christ's face will make them forget all their sufferings; their water then shall be turned into wine, their mourning into music.

5. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the immodesty of temptation. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison; but he is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he walks about tempting, he labours to trapan us into sin; he is either laying of snares or shooting of darts. *Stat in procinctu diabolus.* He laid a train of temptation to blow up the castle of Job's faith. This is as great a grief to a believer, to be followed with temptations to sin, as it is for a virgin to have her chastity

assaulted : but in the kingdom of heaven, the saints shall be freed from the red dragon ; he is cast out of paradise, and shall be for ever locked up in chains, Jude 6.

6. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from all vexing cares. The Greek word for care, comes from a primitive which signifies, to cut the heart in pieces. Care disencumbers the mind, it wastes the spirits, it cuts out the comfort of life. Care is an evil spirit that haunts us ; care to prevent future dangers, and preserve present comforts. All care is full of fear, and fear is full of torment, 1 John iv. 18. God threatens it as a judgment, Ezek. xii. 19. ' They shall eat their bread with carefulness.' Every comfort hath its care, as every rose hath its prickles ; but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall shake off the viper of care. What needs a saint glorified to take any care, who hath all things provided to his hand ? There is the tree of life bearing all sorts of fruit. When the heart shall be freed from sin, the head shall be freed from care.

7. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all doubts and scruples. In this life the best saint hath his doubtings, as the brightest star hath its twinkling. If there were no doubtings, there would be no unbelief : assurance itself doth not exclude all doubting, Ps. xxvi. 3. ' Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes : but at another time, Ps. lxxxix. 49. ' Lord where are thy former loving-kindnesses ?' A christian is like a ship at anchor, which, though it be safe, yet it may sometimes be tossed upon the water. Sometimes a Christian questions his interest in Christ, and his title to the promise : and these doubtings, as they eclipse a Christian's comfort, so they are a bearing false witness against the spirit. But, when the saints shall come into the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no more doubtings ; then a Christian shall say, as Peter, ' Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me,' Acts xii. 11. So, now I know, that I am passed from death to life, and am got beyond all rocks, I have shot the gulf, now I am in my Saviour's embraces for ever.

9. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all society with the wicked. Here we are forced sometimes to be in their company, Ps. cxx. 5. ' Wo is me that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.' Kedar was Ishmael's son, whose children dwelt in Arabia, a profane, barbarous people. Here the wicked are still raising persecutions against the godly, and crucifying their ears with their oaths and curses : Christ's lily is among thorns : but in the heavenly kingdom there shall be no more any prickling briar, Matth. xiii. 41. ' The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.' As Moses said, Exod. xiv. 13. ' Stand still and see the salvation

of the Lord : for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever :’ So will God say, stand still and see the salvation of God ; these your enemies, that vex and molest you, you shall see them again no more for ever. At that day God will separate the precious from the vile ; then Christ will thoroughly purge his floor, he will gather the wheat into the garner, and the wicked which are the chaff, shall be blown into hell.

10. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all signs of God’s displeasure. Here God may be angry with his people : though he hath the heart of a Father, he may have the look of an enemy ; this is sad. As when the sun is gone the dew falls ; when the light of God’s face is gone, tears drop from the saint’s eyes. But, in the kingdom of heaven ; there shall be no spiritual eclipses, there shall never appear any tokens of God’s displeasure ; the saints shall have a constant aspect of love from God, they shall never complain any more, as Cant. v. 6. ‘ My beloved hath withdrawn himself.’

11. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all divisions. That, which is the saddest thing in the world, is to see divisions among them that are good. It is sad, that such as have one faith, yet should not be of one heart : Ephraim envies Judah, and Judah vexeth Ephraim ; it is matter of tears, to see those who are united to Christ, to be divided one from another. The soldier’s spear pierced Christ’s side, but the division of saints wound his heart. But, in the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no vilifying one another, or censuring : those, who before could hardly pray together, shall praise God together ; there shall not be one jarring string in the saints’ music.

12. We shall in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from vanity and dissatisfaction. What Job saith of wisdom, chap. xxviii.

14. ‘ The depth saith, It is not in me ; and the sea saith, It is not in me.’ The same may I say concerning satisfaction ; every creature saith, ‘ It is not in me.’ Take things most pleasing, and which we promise ourselves most content from, distil out the spirits and purest quintessence of them, and we shall say, as Solomon did, Eccl. ii. 11. ‘ And behold all was vanity.’ God never did, nor will put a satisfying virtue into any creature. In the sweetest music the world makes, either there is something wanting, or out of tune. Who would have thought that Haman, who was so great in the king’s favour, ‘ He set his seat above all the princes of the provinces,’ Esth. iii. 1. Yet for the want of the bowing of a knee he is dissatisfied ? but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from these dissatisfactions. The world is like a landscape, you may see gardens and fruit trees, curiously drawn in the landscape, but you cannot enter

into them ; but you may enter into the joys of heaven, ' enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' The soul shall be satisfied, while it bathes in those rivers of pleasure at God's right-hand ; ' I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,' Pl. xvii. 15. Thus you see what the kingdom of glory implies ; namely, a blessed freedom from all evil.

13. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the torments of hell, 1 Thess. i. 10. ' Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.'

(1.) The multiplicity of these torments. In this life, the body is usually exercised but with one pain, the stone or headach ; but in hell there is a diversity of torments ; there is darkness to affright, fire to burn, a lake of sulphur to choke, chains to bind, the worm to gnaw.

(2.) The torments of hell will seize upon every part of the body and soul ; the eye shall be tortured with the sight of devils ; the tongue, that hath sworn so many oaths, shall be tortured, Luke xvi. 24. ' send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' The memory shall be tormented to remember what mercies have been abused, what seasons of grace neglected ; the conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations.

(3.) In the pains of hell there is no mitigation, no mixture of mercy. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, Hab. iii. 2. But in hell there is no alleviation or lessening of the pains : as in the sacrifice of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. God would have no oil of frankincense put into it, so in hell there is no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, no incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

(4.) In the pains of hell there is no intermission. The poets feign of Endymion, that he got leave of Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for one hour's sleep ? Rev. xiv. 11. ' They rest not day nor night.' They are perpetually on the rack.

(5.) In the pains of hell there is no expiration ; they must always lie scorching in flames of wrath, Rev. xiv. 11. ' The smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever : ' but in the heavenly kingdom the elect shall be freed from all infernal torments ; ' Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.' A prison is not made for the king's children. Christ drank that bitter cup of God's wrath, that the saints might never drink it.

*Secondly,* In the kingdom of heaven there is a glorious fruition of all good. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could not fully describe this ; I may say, as Judges xviii. 9, 10. Heaven is called, ' the excellent glory,' 2 Pet. i. 17. I may as well span the firmament, or drain the ocean, as set forth

the glory of this kingdom, *Cælum non habet hyperbolum*; the kingdom of heaven is above all hyperbole. Were the sun ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not parallel the lustre of this kingdom; Apelles' pencil would blot, angels' tongues would lessen it: I can but give you the *skiagraphia*, or dark shadow of it; expect not to see it in all its orient colours, till you are mounted above the stars. But let us not stand afar off, as Moses, to behold this Canaan, but enter into it, and taste the honey.

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Concerning the fruitions and privileges of this heavenly kingdom,

1. We shall have an immediate communion with God himself, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness: This divines call, 'the beatifical vision.' The Psalmist did triumph in that enjoyment he had of God in this life, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' If God, enjoyed by faith, doth give so much comfort to the soul, how much more, when he is enjoyed by immediate vision! Here we see God but darkly through the glass of ordinances, but, in the kingdom of heaven we shall see him 'face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. We shall have an intellectual sight of God, *i. e.* we shall see him with the eyes of our mind; we shall know God as much as the angels in heaven do, Mat. xviii. 10. and 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'We shall know as we are known.' We shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully; as a vessel in the sea is full of the sea, though it holds not all the sea. To see and enjoy God, will be most delicious; in God are beams of majesty, and bowels of mercy. God hath all excellencies concentrated in him, *bonum in quo omnia bona*. If one flower should have the sweetness of all flowers, how sweet would that flower be: All the beauty and sweetness which lies scattered in the creature, is infinitely to be found in God; therefore to see and enjoy him, will ravish the soul with delight. We shall so see God as to love him, and be made sensible of his love; and when we shall have this sweet communion with God, then shall God 'be all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28. light to the eye, manna to the taste, music to the ear.

2. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, with these eyes, see the glorified body of Jesus Christ. This our Saviour makes a great part of the glory of heaven, to view the glory of his human nature, John xvii. 24. 'That they may behold my glory.' When Christ was transfigured upon earth, it is said, 'That his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,' Matth. xvii. 2. If the glory of his transfiguration was so great, what will the glory of his exaltation be? Much of the glory of God shines in Christ, by virtue of the hypostatical union, Col. ii. 9. 'In whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead

bodily.' Through Christ's humanity, as through a bright mirror, we may see some beams of the Divine Majesty shine forth. Put a back of steel to a glass, and you may see a face in it: Christ's human nature is as a back of steel put on the divine nature; through this we may see God, and then our capacities shall be enlarged to a wonderful degree, to perceive this glorious object; and we shall not only see God's glory, but some of his glory shall be put upon us. *Non tantum aderit gloria, sed in-erit*, Bern. A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and not be the happier; but Christ's glory shall be ours, 'We shall be like him,' 1 John iii. 2. We shall shine by his beams.

3. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, enjoy the society of an 'innumerable company of angels,' Heb. xii. 22.

Qu. *But is there not enough in God to fill the soul with delight? Can the sight of angels add to the soul's happiness? What need is there of the light of torches, when the sun shines?*

Ans. Besides the divine essence, the sight of angels is desirable; much of God's curious workmanship shines in the angels; the angels are beautiful, glorious creatures: and as the several strings in a lute make the harmony sweeter, and the several stars make the firmament brighter, so the society with angels will make the delight of heaven the greater; and we shall not only see the angels with the glorified eye of our understanding, but converse with them.

4. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have sweet society with glorified saints; then the communion of saints will be illustrious.—O what a blessed time will it be when those who have prayed, wept, suffered together, shall rejoice together? we shall see the saints in their white linen of purity, and see them as so many crowned kings: In beholding the saints glorified, we shall behold an heaven full of suns. Some move the question, Whether we shall know one another in heaven? Surely our knowledge shall not be diminished, but increased. It is the judgment of Luther and Anselm, and many other divines, that we shall know one another; yea, the saints of all ages, whose faces we never saw: and, when we shall see the saints in glory without their spots, viz. their infirmities, pride and passion, this will be a glorious sight. We see how Peter was transported, when he saw but two prophets in the transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 3. but, what a blessed sight will it be, when we shall see such a glorious company of prophets, and martyrs, and holy men of God? How sweet will the music be, when they shall all sing together in concert, in the heavenly choir! And though, in this great assembly of saints and angels, 'one star may differ from another in glory,' yet no such weed as envy shall ever

grow in the paradise of God ; then there shall be perfect love, which as it casts out fear, so also envy ; though one vessel of glory may hold more than another, yet every vessel shall be full.

5. In the kingdom of heaven there shall be incomprehensible joy. Aristotle saith, “ joy proceeds from union.” When the saints’ union with Christ is perfected in heaven, then their joy shall be full ; all the birds of the heavenly paradise sing for joy. What joy when the saints shall see the great gulf shut, and know that they are passed from death to life ! What joy, when they are as holy as they would be, and as God would have them to be ! What joy to hear the music of angels, to see the golden banner of Christ’s love displayed over the soul, to be drinking the water of life which is quintessential, and is sweeter than all nectar and ambrosia ! What joy, when the saints shall see Christ clothed in their flesh, sitting in glory above the angels ! Then they shall ‘ enter into the joy of their Lord,’ Mat. xxv. 21. Here joy enters into the saints, in heaven ‘ they enter into joy.’ O thou saint of God, who now hankest thy harp upon the willows, and minglest thy drink with weeping, in the kingdom of heaven thy water shall be turned into wine ; you shall have so much felicity, that your souls cannot wish for more. The sea is not so full of water, as the heart of a glorified saint is of joy : there can no more be sorrow in heaven, than there can be joy in hell.

6. In heaven there is honour and dignity put upon the saints : A kingdom imports honour. All that come into heaven are kings ; they have, 1. A crown, Rev. ii. 10. *Dabo tibi*, the crown of life ; *corona est insignia regiae potestatis*. This crown is not lined with thorns, but hung with jewels, it is a never-fading crown, 1 Peter v. 4. 2. The saints in heaven have their robes ; they exchange their sackcloth for white robes, Rev. vii. ‘ I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, clothed in white robes.’ Robes signify their glory, white their sanctity. And, 3. They sit with Christ upon the throne, Rev. iii. 22. We read 1 Kings iv. 32. the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees, and open flowers covered with gold ; an emblem of that victory and that garland of glory which the saints shall wear in the kingdom of heaven. When all the titles and ensigns of worldly honour shall lie in the dust, the mace, the silver star, the garter, then shall the saint’s honour remain.

7. We shall in the kingdom of heaven, have a blessed rest. Rest is the end of motion ; heaven is *centrum quietatimum animæ*, the blessed centre where the soul doth acquiesce and rest. In this life we are subject to unquiet motions and fluctuations, 2 Cor. vii. 5. ‘ We are troubled on every side :’ like a ship on



the sea having the waves beating on both sides : but in the kingdom of heaven there is rest, Heb. iv. 9. How welcome is rest to a weary traveller? When death cuts asunder the string of the body, the soul, as a dove, flies away, and is at rest. This is when the saints shall lie on Christ's bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.

8. The saints shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have their bodies richly bespangled with glory ; they shall be full of clarity and brightness. As Moses' face shined, that Israel were not able to behold the glory, Exod. xxxiv. 30. The bodies of the saints shall shine seven times brighter than the sun, saith Chrysostom ; they shall have such a resplendency of beauty on them, that the angels shall fall in love with them ; and no wonder. ' For they shall be made like Christ's glorious body,' Phil. iii. 21. The bodies of saints glorified need no jewels, when they shall shine like Christ's body.

9. In the heavenly kingdom is eternity ; 'tis an eternal fruition, they shall never be put out of the throne, Rev. xxiii. 5. ' They shall reign for ever and ever.' It is called, ' the everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. and ' an eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. The flowers of paradise, of which the saints' garlands are made, never wither. If there could be a cessation of heaven's glory, or the saints had but the least fear or suspicion of losing their felicity, it would infinitely abate and cool their joy ; but their kingdom is for ever, the rivers of paradise cannot be dried up, Ps. xvi. 11. ' At thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.' The kingdom of heaven was typified by the temple, which was built with stone, covered with cedar, overlaid with gold, to shew the fixed permanent state of glory, that kingdom abides for ever. Well may we pray, ' Thy kingdom come.'

Having spoken of the kingdom of grace, and how we may know that kingdom is set up in our hearts, I am next to speak of the kingdom of glory, or heaven.

1. What is meant by the kingdom of heaven.
2. What are the properties of this kingdom.
3. Wherein this heavenly kingdom excels all the kingdoms upon earth.

4. When this kingdom shall be bestowed.

5. Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of it.

6. Why we should pray for the coming of this kingdom.

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the kingdom of heaven ?*

Ans. 1. It imports a blessed freedom from all evil. 2. It implies a glorious fruition of all good. (1.) Immediate communion with God, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness. (2.) A visible beholding the glorified body of Jesus Christ. (3.)

A glorious vision of saints and angels. (4.) Dignity and honour, the crown, and white robes. (5.) A blessed rest.

Qu. 2. *What are the properties or qualifications of the kingdom of heaven?*

Ans. 1. The glory of this kingdom is solid and substantial; the Hebrew word for glory signifies a weight, to shew how solid and weighty the glory of the celestial kingdom is: the glory of the worldly kingdom is airy and imaginary, like a blazing comet or fancy, Acts xxv. 23. Agrippa and Bernice came with a great pomp, with a great fancy, Job xxvi. 7. The earth hangs like a ball in the air, without any thing to uphold it. The glory of the heavenly kingdom is substantial, it hath twelve foundations, Rev. xxi. 14. That which God and angels count glory is true glory.

2. The glory of this kingdom is satisfying, Psal. xxxvi. 9. 'With thee is the fountain of life.' How can they choose but be full, who are at the fountain-head? Psal. xvii. 15. 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' *i. e.* when I awake in the morning of the resurrection, having some of the beams of thy glory shining in me, I shall be satisfied, Job xxviii. 14. The creature saith concerning satisfaction, 'It is not in me.' If we go for happiness to the creature, we go to the wrong box: only heaven's glory is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. A Christian, bathing himself in these rivers of pleasures, cries out in a divine extacy, I have enough. The soul is never satisfied till it hath God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. Dissatisfaction ariseth from some defect, but God is an infinite good, and there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

3. The glory of heaven's kingdom is pure and unmixed; the streams of paradise are not muddied, *omnia clara, omnia jucunda*; there, that gold hath no alloy: no bitter ingredient in that glory, but pure as the honey-drops from the comb; there is a rose grows without prickles, the rose of Sharon; there, is ease without pain: honour without disgrace, life without death.

4. The glory of this kingdom is constantly exhilarating and refreshing; there is fulness but no surfeit. Worldly comforts, though sweet, yet in time grow stale: a down-bed pleareth a while, but within a while we are weary, and would rise. Too much pleasure is a pain; but the glory of heaven doth never surfeit or nauseate; the reason is, because, as there are all rarities imaginable, so every moment fresh delights spring from God into the glorified soul.

5. The glory of this kingdom is distributed to every individual saint: in an earthly kingdom, the crown goes but to one, a crown will but fit one head; but in that kingdom above the

crown goes to all, Rev. i. 6. All the elect are kings. The land is settled chiefly upon the heir, and the rest are all provided for ; but, in the kingdom of heaven, all the saints are heirs, Rom. viii. 17. 'Heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.' God hath land enough to give to all his heirs.

6. Lucid and transparent. The kingdom of heaven is adorned and bespangled with light, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Light is the glory of the creation, Eccl. xi. 7. 'The light is sweet.' Hell is a dark dungeon, Matth. xxii. 13. 'Fire, but no light.' The kingdom of heaven is a *diaphanum*, all embroidered with light, clear as crystal. How can there want light, where Christ the Sun of righteousness displays his golden beams ? Rev. xxi. 23. 'The glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

7. The glory of this kingdom is adequate and proportionable to the desire of the soul. In creature-fruitions, that which doth recommend them, and set them off to us, is suitableness : the content of marriage doth not lie either in beauty of portion, but the suitableness of disposition. The excellency of a feast is, when the meat is suited to the palate ; this is one ingredient in the glory of heaven, it exactly suits the desires of the glorified saints ; we shall not say in heaven, here is a dish I do not love ! There shall be music suits the ear, the anthems of angels ; and food that suits with the glorified palate, the hidden manna of God's love.

8. The glory of this kingdom will be seasonable. The seasonableness of a mercy adds to its beauty and sweetness ; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. After an hard winter in this cold climate, will it not be seasonable to have the spring-flowers of glory appear, and the singing of the birds of paradise come ? when we have been wearied, and even tired out in battle with sin and Satan, will not a crown be seasonable ?

Qu. *Wherein the kingdom of heaven infinitely excels all the kingdoms of the earth ?*

Ans. 1. It excels in the architect : other kingdoms have men to raise their structures, but God himself laid the first stone in this kingdom, Heb. xi. 10. This kingdom is of the greatest antiquity ; God was the first king and founder of it ; no angel was worthy to lay a stone in this building.

2. This heavenly kingdom excels in altitude ; it is higher situated than any kingdom ; the higher any thing is, the more excellent : the fire, being the most sublime element, is most noble. The kingdom of heaven is seated above all the visible orbs ; there is, 1. The airy heaven, which is the space from the earth to the sphere of the moon. 2. The starry heaven, the place where are the planets of an higher elevation, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. 3. The *coelum empyraeum*, the empyrian heaven,

which Paul calls the third heaven : where Christ is, there is the kingdom of glory situated. This kingdom is so high, that no scaling ladders of enemies can reach it ; so high, that the old serpent cannot shoot up his fiery darts to it. If wicked men could build their nests among the stars, yet the least believer would shortly be above them.

3. The kingdom of heaven excels all others in splendor and riches ; it is described by precious stones, Rev. xxi. 19. What are all the rarities of the earth to this kingdom, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices ? what are the wonders of the world to it, the Egyptian pyramids, the temple of Diana, the pillar of the sun offered to Jupiter ? what a rich kingdom is that where God will lay out all his cost ? Those who are poor in the world, yet, as soon as they come into this kingdom, grow rich, as rich as the angels ; other kingdoms are enriched with gold, this is enriched with the Deity.

4. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in holiness. Kingdoms on earth are for the most part unholy : there is a common shore of luxury and uncleanness running in them : kingdoms are stages for sin to be acted on, Isa. xxviii. 8. ‘ All tables are full of vomit.’ But the kingdom of heaven is so holy, that it will not mix with any corruption, Rev. xxi. 27. ‘ There shall enter into it nothing that defileth.’ It is so pure a soil, that no serpent of sin will breed there : there is beauty which is not stained with lust, and honour which is not swelled with pride. Holiness is the brightest jewel of the crown of heaven.

5. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in its pacific nature ; it is *regnum pacis*, a kingdom of peace. Peace is the glory of a kingdom ; *pax una triumphis innumeris melior*. A king’s crown is more adorned with the white lily of peace, than when it is beset with the red roses of a bloody war. But where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth ? Either home-bred divisions, or foreign invasions, 2 Chron. xv. 5. ‘ There was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in.’ But the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of peace ; there are no enemies to conflict with ; all Christ’s enemies shall be ‘ under his feet,’ Psalm cx. i. The gates of that kingdom shall stand open, Rev. xxi. 23. ‘ The gates shall not be shut at all ;’ to shew, that there is no fear of an assault of an enemy : the saints, when they die, are said to enter into peace, Isa. lvii. 2. There is no beating of drums or roaring of cannons, but the voice of harpers harping, in token of peace, Rev. xiv. 2. In heaven, ‘ righteousness and peace kiss each other.’

6. The kingdom of heaven excels in magnitude ; it is of vast dimensions. Though the gate of the kingdom be strait, we must pass into it through the strait gate of mortification ; yet, when once we are in, it is very large : though there be an in-

numerable company of saints and angels, yet there is room enough for them. The kingdom of heaven may be called by the name of that well, Gen. xxvi. 22. 'Jacob called the name of it Rehoboth; for he said, now the Lord hath made room for us.' Thou, who art now confined to a small cottage, when thou comest into the celestial kingdom, thou shalt not be straitened for room. As every star hath a large orb to move in, so it shall be with the saints, when they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.

7. The kingdom of heaven excels in unity; all the inhabitants agree together in love: love will be the perfume and music of heaven; as love to God will be intense, so to the saints. Perfect love, as it casts out fear, so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth (which was the blemish of their profession) yet, in the kingdom of heaven, the fire of strife shall cease; there shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores, but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love; there Luther and Zuinglius are agreed: Satan cannot put in his cloven foot there to make divisions; there shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saints' music. It were worth dying to be in that kingdom.

8. This kingdom exceeds all earthly in joy and pleasure; therefore it is called paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4. For delight: there are all things to cause pleasure; there is the water of life pure as chrystal; there is the honey-comb of God's love dropping, it is called 'entering into the joy of our Lord.' Matth. xxv. 23. There are two things which cause joy.

(1.) Separation from sin shall be shaken off, then joy follows. There can no more be sorrow in heaven, than there can be joy in hell.

2. Perfect union with Christ: joy, as Aristotle saith, flows from union with the object. When our union with Christ shall be perfect, then our joy shall be full: if the joy of faith be so great, 1 Pet. i. 8. Then what will the joy of sight be? Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way, but the full sacks of corn were kept till they came to their father's house: God gives the saints a taste of joy here, but the full sacks are kept till they come to heaven. Not only the organical parts, the outward senses, the eye, ear, taste, shall be filled with joy; but the heart of a glorified saint shall be filled with joy. The understanding, will and affections are such a triangle, as none can fill but the Trinity: there must needs be infinite joy, where nothing is seen but beauty; nothing is tasted but love.

9. This kingdom of heaven exceeds all earthly in self-perfection: other kingdoms are defective, they have not all provision within themselves, but are fain to traffic abroad to supply their

wants at home : king Solomon did send to Ophir for gold, 2 Chron. viii. 18. But there is no defect in the kingdom of heaven ; it hath all commodities of its own growth, Rev. xxi. 7. There is the pearl of price, the morning-star, the mountains of spices, the bed of love ; there are those sacred rarities, where-with God and angels are delighted.

10. This kingdom of heaven excels all other in honour and nobility. It doth not only equal them in the ensigns of royalty, the throne and white robes ; but it doth far transcend them : other kings are of the blood royal ; but they in this heavenly kingdom are born of God : other kings converse with nobles ; the saints glorified are fellow-communers with angels : they have a more noble crown, it is made of the flowers of paradise, and is a crown that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. They sit on a better throne : king Solomon, 1 Kings x. 18. sat on a throne of ivory overlaid with gold ; but the saints are in heaven higher advanced, they sit with Christ upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They shall judge the princes and great ones on the earth, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. This honour have all the saints glorified.

11. This kingdom of heaven excels all others in healthfulness. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourd ; kingdoms are oft hospitals of sick persons ; but the kingdom of heaven is a most healthful climate : physicians there are out of date ; no distemper there, no passing bell, or bill of mortality, Luke xx. 36. ‘ Neither can they die any more.’ In the heavenly climate are no ill vapours to breed diseases, but a sweet aromatical smell coming from Christ ; all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

12. This kingdom of heaven excels in duration, it abides for ever. Suppose earthly kingdoms to be more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire ; yet they are corruptible and fading, Hos. i. 4. ‘ I will cause the kingdom to cease.’ ‘ Troy and Athens now lie buried in their ruins ; *jam seges est ubi Troja fuit*. Mortality is the disgrace of all earthly kingdoms ; but the kingdom of heaven hath eternity written upon it, it is an everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. It is founded upon a strong basis, God’s omnipotency ; this kingdom the saints shall never be turned out of, or be deposed from their throne, as some kings have been, viz. Henry VI. &c. But shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xxi. 5.

How should all this affect our hearts ? What should we mind but this kingdom of heaven, which doth more outshine all the kingdoms of the earth, than the sun outshines the light of a taper ?

4. Qu. *When shall this kingdom be bestowed ?*

*Ans.* This glory in the kingdom of heaven shall be begun at death, but not perfected till the resurrection.

1. The saints shall enter upon the kingdom of glory immediately after death; before their bodies are buried, their souls shall be crowned, Phil. i. 23. 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;' from this connection, departing, and being with Christ, we see clearly that there is a *jubtitus transitus*, speedy passage from death to glory; no sooner is the soul of a believer divorced from the body, but it presently goes to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 8. 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' It were better for believers to stay here, if immediately after death they were not with Christ in glory; for here the saints are daily increasing their grace; here they may have many *praelibamina*, sweet tastes of God's love; so that it were better to stay here, if their soul should sleep in their body, and they should not have a speedy sight of God in glory: but this is the consolation of believers, they shall not stay long from their kingdom; it is but winking and they shall see God. It will be a blessed change to a believer, from a desert to a paradise, from a bloody battle to a victorious crown: and a sudden change: no sooner did Lazarus die, but he had a convoy of angels to conduct his soul to the kingdom of glory. You who now are full of bodily diseases, scarce a day well, Ps. xxxi. 10. 'My life is spent with grief;' be of good comfort, you may be happy before you are aware; before another week or month be over, you may be in the kingdom of glory, and then all tears shall be wiped away.

2. The glory in the kingdom of heaven, will be fully perfected at the resurrection, and general day of judgment; then the bodies and souls of believers will be reunited; what joy will there be at the reunion and meeting together of the soul and body of a saint! O what a welcome will the soul give to the body! "O my dear body, thou didst often join with me in prayer, and now thou shalt join with me in praise; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown a vile body, but now thou art made like Christ's glorious body; we were once for a time divorced, but now we are married, and crowned together in a kingdom, and shall mutually congratulate each other's felicity."

5. Qu. *Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of this kingdom of glory?*

*Ans.* That this blessed kingdom shall be bestowed on the saints, is beyond all dispute.

1. God hath promised it, Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' Luke xxi. 29. 'I appoint unto you a kingdom.' [Gr. *diatithemai*] 'I bequeath it as my last-will and testament.' Hath God promised a king-

dom, and will he not make it good? God's promise is better than any bond, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.' The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise?

2. There is a price laid down for this kingdom. Heaven is not only a kingdom which God hath promised, but which Christ hath purchased; it is called a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. Though this kingdom is given us freely, yet Christ bought it with the price of his blood; Christ's blood is an heaven procuring blood, Heb. x. 19. 'Having boldness to enter into the holiest (*i. e.* into Heaven) by the blood of Jesus.' *Crux Christi clavis paradisi*, Christ's blood is the key that opens the gates of heaven. Should not the saints have this kingdom, then Christ should lose his purchase; Christ on the cross was in hard travail, Isa. xiii. 11. He travailed to bring forth salvation to the elect: should not they possess the kingdom when they die, Christ should lose his travail, all his pangs and agonies of soul upon the cross should be in vain.

3. Christ prays that the saints may have this kingdom settled upon them, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,' *i. e.* in heaven. This is Christ's prayer, that the saints may be with him in his kingdom, and be bespangled with some of the beams of his glory: now, if they should not go into this heavenly kingdom, then Christ's prayer will be frustrated: but that cannot be, for he is God's favourite, John xi. 42. 'I know thou hearest me always;' and besides, what Christ prays for, he hath power to give: observe the manner of Christ's prayer, 'Father, I will;' Father, there he prays as man; 'I will;' there he gives as God.

4. The saints must have this blessed kingdom by virtue of Christ's ascension, John xx. 17. 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God.' Where lies the comfort of this? Here it lies, Jesus Christ ascended to take possession of heaven for all believers. As an husband takes up land in another country in the behalf of his wife; so Christ went to take possession of heaven, in the behalf of all believers. John xiv. 2. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' My ascension is to make all things ready against your coming; I go to prepare the heavenly mansions for you. The flesh that Christ hath taken into heaven, is a sure pledge that all our flesh and bodies shall be where he is ere long. Christ did not ascend to heaven, as a private person, but as a public person, for the good of all believers: his ascension was a certain fore-runner of the saints' ascending into heaven.

5. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, in regard of the previous work of the Spirit in their hearts. They have the be-



ginning of the kingdom of heaven in them here ; grace is heaven begun in the soul : besides, God gives them *primitus spiritus*, the first-fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23. The first-fruits are the comforts of the Spirit. These first-fruits under the law were a certain sign to the Jews of the full crop of vintage which they should after receive : the first-fruits of the Spirit consisting of joy and peace, do assure the saints of the full vintage of glory they shall be ever reaping in the kingdom of God ; and the saints in this life are said to have the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, 2 Cor. v. 5. As an earnest is part of payment, and an assurance of payment in full to be made in due time ; so God's spirit in the hearts of believers, giving them his comforts, bestows on them an earnest, or taste of glory, which doth further assure them of that full reward, which they shall have in the kingdom of heaven, 1 Pet. i. 18. ' Believing, ye rejoice,' there is the earnest of heaven, *ver.* 9. ' Receiving the end of your faith,' salvation, there is the full payment.

6. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, by virtue of their coalition and union with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore they must be where their head is. Indeed the Arminians hold, that a justified person may fall from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the kingdom lost ; but I will demand of them, can Christ lose a member of his body ? Then he is not perfect ; and if Christ may lose one member of his body, why not as well all, by the same reason ? And so he shall be an head without a body : but be assured a believer's union with Christ cannot be broken, and so long he cannot be hindred of the kingdom, John xvii. 19. What was said of Christ's natural body is as true of his mystical, John x. 39. ' A bone of him shall not be broken.' Look how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven : so shall every member of his mystical body be carried up into glory.

7. We read of some who have been translated into this kingdom. Paul had a sight of it, for he was caught up into the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. And the converted thief on the cross was translated into glory, Luke xxiii. 43. ' This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By all that hath been said, it is most evident, that believers have a glorious kingdom laid up for them in reversion, and that they shall go to this kingdom when they die : there are none that doubt of the certainty of the heavenly kingdom, but such as doubt of the verity of scripture.

6. Qu. *Why should we so earnestly pray for this heavenly kingdom, ' Thy kingdom come ?'*

. Ans. 1. Because it is a kingdom worth the praying for ; it exceeds the glory of all the earthly kingdoms, it hath ' gates of

pearl,' Rev. xxi. 21. We have heard of a cabinet of pearl, but when did we hear of gates of pearl? In that kingdom is the bed of love, the mountains of spices; there are the cherubims, not to keep us out, but to welcome us into the kingdom. Heaven is a kingdom worth the praying for; there is nothing wanting in that kingdom which may complete the saints' happiness; for, wherein doth happiness consist? Is it in knowledge? We 'shall know as we are known:' is it in dainty fair? we shall be at the 'marriage supper of the Lamb.' Is it in rich apparel? We shall be 'clothed in long white robes: is it in delicious music? We shall hear the choir of angels singing: is it in dominion? We shall reign as kings and judge angels: Is it in pleasure? 'We shall enter into the joy of our Lord?' Sure then this kingdom is worth praying for, 'Thy kingdom come.' Would God give us a vision of heaven a while, as he did Stephen who 'saw heaven opened,' Acts vii. 56. We should fall into a trance; and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would we put up this petition, 'Thy kingdom come.'

2. We must pray for this kingdom of glory, because God will not bestow this kingdom on any without prayer, Rom. ii. 7. 'They who seek for glory and immortality,' and how do we seek but by prayer? God hath promised a kingdom, and we must by prayer put the bond in suit: God is not so lavish as to throw away a kingdom on them who do not ask it. And certainly, if Christ himself, who had merited glory, did yet pray for it, John xvii. 5. 'Now, O Father, glorify me with thy own self;' how much more ought we to pray for the excellent glory, who have this kingdom granted as a charter of God's mere grace and favour.

3. We must pray that the kingdom of glory may come, that by going into it, we may make an end of sinning. I think sometimes, what a blessed time it will be, never to have a sinful thought more! though we must not pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' out of discontent, because we would be rid of the troubles and crosses of this life. This was Jonah's fault; he would die in a pet, because God took away his gourd; 'Lord (saith he) take away my life too,' Jonah iv. 8. But we must pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' out of an holy design that the fetters of corruption may be pulled off, and we may be as the angels, those virgin-spirits, who never sin. This made the church pray, Rev. xxii. 20. *Veni Domine Jesu.*

4. Because that all Christ's enemies shall be put under his feet: the devil shall have no more power to tempt, nor wicked men to persecute; the antichristian hierarchy, shall be pulled down, and Zion's glory shall shine as a lamp, and the Turkish strength shall be broken.

5. We must pray earnestly that the kingdom of glory may come, that we may see God 'face to face,' and have an uninterrupted and eternal communion with him in the empyrean heaven. Moses desired but a glimpse of God's glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18. How then should we pray to see him in all his embroidered robes of glory, when he shall shine ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian splendor! here, in this life, we do rather desire God, than enjoy him; how earnestly therefore should we pray, 'thy kingdom of glory come!' the beholding and enjoying God will be the diamond in the ring, the very quintessence of glory. And must we pray, 'thy kingdom come?' How then are they ever like to come to heaven, who never pray for it? Though God gives some profane persons 'daily bread,' who never pray for it; yet he will not give them a kingdom, who never pray for it. God may feed them, but he will never crown them.

*Use I. Of information.*

1. *Branch.* From all this you see then, that there is nothing within the whole sphere of religion imposed upon unreasonable terms. When God bids us serve him, it is no unreasonable request, he will out of free grace enthrone us in a kingdom. When we hear of repentance, steeping our souls in brinish tears for sin; or of mortification, beheading our king-sin, we are ready to grumble, and think this is hard and unreasonable: 'but, do we serve God for nought?' Is it not infinite bounty to reward us with a kingdom? This kingdom is as far above our thoughts, as it is beyond our deserts. No man can say, without wrong to God, that he is an hard master; though he sets us about hard work, yet he is no hard master: God gives double pay; he gives great vails in his service, sweet joy and peace; and a great reward after, 'an eternal weight of glory.' God gives the spring-flowers, and a crop; he settles upon us such a kingdom as exceeds our faith. *Premium quod fide non attingitur*, Aug. 'Such as mortal eye hath not seen, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. Alas, what an infinite difference is there between duty enjoined, and the kingdom prepared! what is the shedding of a tear to a crown? So that God's 'commands are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3. Our service cannot be so hard, as a kingdom is sweet.

2. *Branch.* See hence the royal bounty of God to his children, that he hath prepared a kingdom for them, a kingdom bespangled with glory; it is infinitely above the model we can draw of it in our thoughts. The painter going to draw the picture of Helena, as not being able to draw her beauty to the life, drew her face covered with a vail: so, when we speak of the kingdom of heaven, we must draw a vail, we cannot set it forth in all its orient beauty and magnificence; gold and pearl

do but faintly shadow it out, Rev. xxi. The glory of this kingdom is better felt than expressed.

1. They who inherit this kingdom are *amicti stolis albis*, 'clothed with white robes,' Rev. vii. 9. White robes denote three things : (1.) Their dignity ; the Persians were arrayed in white, in token of honour. (2.) Their purity ; the magistrates among the Romans were clothed in white, therefore called *candidati*, to shew their integrity : thus the queen the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the 'righteousness of the saints,' Rev. xix. 8. (3.) Their joy : white is an emblem of joy, Eccl. ix. 7. 'Eat thy bread with joy, let thy garments be always white.'

2. The dwellers in this kingdom have 'palms in their hands,' Rev. vii. 9. In token of victory. They are conquerors over the world : and, being victors, they have now palm-branches.

3. They sit upon the throne with Christ, Rev. iii. 21. When Cæsar returned from conquering his enemies, there was set for him a chair of state in the senate, and a throne in the theatre. Thus the saints in glory, after their heroic victories, shall sit upon a throne with Christ. Here is royal bounty in God, to bestow such an illustrious kingdom upon the saints. 'Tis a mercy to be pardoned, but what is it to be crowned ? 'Tis a mercy to be delivered from wrath to come, but what is it to be invested into a kingdom ? 'Behold, what manner of love is this !' Earthly princes may bestow great gifts and donations upon their subjects, but they keep the kingdom to themselves. Though king Pharaoh advanced Joseph to honour, and took the ring off his finger and gave him, yet he would keep the kingdom to himself, Gen. xli. 40. But God enthrones the saints in a kingdom ; God thinks nothing too good for his children ; we are ready to think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for him ; but he doth not think much to bestow a kingdom upon us.

3. *Branch.* See hence, that religion is no ignominious, disgraceful thing. Satan labours to cast all the odium and reproach upon it that he can ; that it is devout frenzy, folly in grain, Acts xxviii. 22. 'As for this sect, we know that it is every where spoken against.' But wise men measure things by the end ; what is the end of a religious life ? It ends in a kingdom. Would a prince regard the slights of a few frantics, when he is going to be crowned ? You who are beginners, bind their reproaches as a crown about your head, despise their censures as much as their praise ; a kingdom is a-coming.

4. *Branch.* See what contrary ways the godly and the wicked go at death ; the godly go to a kingdom, the wicked to a prison : the devil is the jailor, and they are bound with the 'chains of darkness,' Jude 6. But what are these chains ? Not

iron chains, but worse; the chain of God's decree, decreeing them to torment; and the chain of God's power, whereby he binds them fast under wrath: this is the deplorable condition of impenitent sinners, they do not go to a kingdom when they die, but to a prison. O think what horror and despair will possess the wicked, when they see themselves ingulphed in misery, and their condition hopeless, helpless, endless; they are in a fiery prison, and no possibility of getting out. A servant under the law, who had an hard master, yet every seventh year was a year of release when he might go free; but in hell there is no year of release when the damned shall go free; the fire, the worm, the prison, are eternal. If the whole world, from earth to heaven, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain of sand, how many millions of ages would pass before that vast heap of sand would be quite spent: yet if after all this time the sinner might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word *ever* breaks the heart with despair.

5. *Branch.* See then that which may make us in love with holy duties; every duty, spiritually performed, brings us a step nearer to the kingdom: *finis dat amabilitatem mediis*. He whose heart is set on riches, counts trading pleasant, because it brings in riches: if our hearts are set upon heaven, we shall love duty, because it brings us by degrees to the kingdom; we are going to heaven in the way of duty. Holy duties increase grace; and as grace ripens, so glory hastens; the duties of religion are irksome to flesh and blood, but we should look upon them as spiritual chariots to carry us apace to the heavenly kingdom. The protestants in France called their church paradise; and well they might, because the ordinances did lead them to the paradise of God. As every flower hath its sweetness, so would every duty, if we would look upon it as giving us a lift nearer heaven.

6. *Branch.* It shews us what little cause the children of God have, to envy the prosperity of the wicked. *Quis arario quis plenius loculis indiget*, Sen. The wicked have the 'waters of a full cup wrung out to them,' Psal. lxxiii. 10. As if they had a monopoly of happiness, they have all they can desire; nay, 'they have more than their heart can wish,' Psal. lxxii. 10. They steep themselves in pleasure, Job xxi. 12. 'They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.' The wicked are high, when God's people are low in the world: the goats clamber up the mountains of preferment, when Christ's sheep are below in the valley of tears: the wicked are clothed in purple, while the godly are in sackcloth; the prosperity of the wicked is a great stumbling block: this made Averroes deny a providence, and made Asaph say, 'Surely I

‘have cleansed my heart in vain,’ Psal. lxxiii. 12. But there is no cause of envy at their prosperity, if we consider two things.

1. ‘This is all they must have, Luke xvi. 25. ‘Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things :’ thou hadst all thy heaven here. Luther calls the Turkish empire a bone which God casts to dogs.

2. ‘That God hath laid up better things for his children : he hath prepared a kingdom of glory for them ; they shall have the beatifical vision ; they shall hear the angels sing in concert ; they shall be crowned with the pleasures of paradise for ever. O then envy not the flourishing prosperity of the wicked ; they go thro’ fair way to execution, and the godly go thro’ foul way to coronation.

7. *Branch.* Is there a kingdom of glory a-coming ? Then see how happy all the saints are at death, they go to a kingdom ; they shall see God’s face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory. The godly at death shall be installed into their honour, and have the crown royal set upon their head. They have, in the kingdom of heaven, the quintessence of all delights : they have the water of life clear as crystal ; they have all aromatic perfumes ; they feed not on the dew of Hermon, but the manna of angels : they lie in Christ’s bosom, that bed of spices. There is such a pleasant variety in the happiness of heaven, that after millions of years it will be as fresh and desirable as at the first hour’s enjoying. In the kingdom of heaven, the saints are crowned with all those perfections, which the human nature is capable of : the desires of the glorified saints are infinitely satisfied ; there is nothing absent, that they could wish might be enjoyed, there is nothing present that they could wish might be removed. They who are got into this kingdom would be loth to come back to the earth again, it would be much to their loss ; they would not leave the fatness and sweetness of the olive, to court the bramble ; the things which tempt us, they would scorn. What are golden bags to the golden beams of the Sun of righteousness ? In the kingdom of heaven there is glory in its highest elevation ; in that kingdom is knowledge without ignorance, holiness without sin, beauty without blemish, strength without weakness, light without darkness, riches without poverty, ease without pain, liberty without restraint, rest without labour, joy without sorrow, love without hatred, plenty without surfeit, honour without disgrace, health without sickness, peace without war, contentation without cessation. O the happiness of those that die in the Lord, they go into this blessed kingdom ! And if they are so happy when they die, then let me make two inferences.

1. *Infer.* What little cause have the saints to fear death? Are any afraid of going to a kingdom? what is there in this world should make us desirous to stay here? do we not see God dishonoured, and how can we bear it? is not this world a 'valley of tears,' and do we weep to leave it? are not we in a wilderness among fiery serpents, and are we afraid to go from these serpents? Our best friends live above: God is ever displaying the banner of his love in heaven, and is there any love like his? are there any sweeter smiles, or softer embraces than his? what news so welcome as leaving the world, and going to a kingdom? Christian, thy dying day will be thy wedding day, and dost thou fear it? is a slave afraid to be redeemed? is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower, and gives a jewel; it takes away a short lease, and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came at shore.

2. *Infer.* If the godly are so happy when they die, they go to a kingdom; then, what little cause have we to mourn immoderately for the death of godly friends? shall we mourn for their preferment? why should we shed tears immoderately for them who have all tears wiped from their eyes? why should we be swallowed up of grief, for them who are swallowed up of joy? They are gone to their kingdom; they are not lost, but gone a little before; not perished, but translated, *Non amissi sed præmissi*, Cyprian. They are removed for their advantage; as if one should be removed out of a smoky cottage to a palace. Elijah was removed in a fiery chariot to heaven: shall Elisha weep inordinately because he enjoys not the company of Elijah? Shall Jacob weep when he knows his son Joseph is preferred, and made chief ruler in Egypt? We should not be excessive in grief, when we know our godly friends are advanced to a kingdom. I confess, when any of our relations die in their impenitency, there is just cause of mourning, but not when our friends take their flight to glory. David lost two sons, Absalom a wicked son, he mourned for him bitterly; he lost the child he had by Bathsheba, he mourned not when the child was departed. St. Ambrose gives the reason, David had a good hope, nay, assurance that the child was translated into heaven, but he doubted of Absalom; he died in his sins, therefore David wept so for him, 'O Absalom, my son, my son.' But though we are to weep to think any of our flesh should burn in hell, yet let us not be cast down for them who are so highly preferred at

death as to a kingdom. Our godly friends who die in the Lord, are in that blessed estate, and are crowned with such infinite delights, that if we could hear them speak to us out of heaven, they would say, ‘ weep not for us, but weep for yourselves,’ Luke xxiii. 28. We are in our kingdom, weep not at our preferment, ‘ but weep for yourselves,’ who are in a sinful sorrowful world ; you are tossing on the troublesome waves, but we are got to the haven ; you are fighting with temptations, while we are wearing a victorious crown ; ‘ weep not for us, but weep for yourselves.’

8. *Branch.* See the wisdom of the godly, they have the serpent’s eye in the dove’s head, ‘ wise virgins,’ Matt. xxv. 2. Their wisdom appears in their choice, they choose that which will bring them to a kingdom, they choose grace, and what is grace but the seed of glory ? They choose Christ with his cross, but this cross leads to a crown. ‘ Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,’ Heb. xi. 25. It was a wise rational choice, he knew if he suffered he should reign. At the day of judgment, those whom the world accounted foolish, will appear to be wise ; they made a prudent choice, they chose holiness, and what is happiness but the quintessence of holiness ? ‘ They chose affliction with the people of God ;’ but through this purgatory of affliction, they pass to paradise. God will proclaim the saints’ wisdom before men and angels.

9. *Branch.* See the folly of those who, for vain pleasures and profits, will lose such a glorious kingdom : like that cardinal of France, who said, “ He would lose his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris.” I may say, as Eccl. ix. 3. ‘ Madness is in their heart.’ Lyfimachus, for a draught of water, lost his empire ; so, for a draught of sinful pleasure, these will lose heaven. We too much resemble our grandfather Adam, who for an apple lost paradise : many for trifles, to get a shilling more in the shop or bushel, will venture the loss of heaven. This will be an aggravation of the sinner’s torment, to think how foolishly he was undone ; for a flash of impure joy he lost an eternal weight of glory. Would it not vex one who is the lord of a manor to think he should part with his stately inheritance for a fit of music ? such are they who let heaven go for a song. This will make the Devil insult at the last day, to think how he had gulled men, and made them lose their souls and their happiness for ‘ lying vanities.’ If Satan could make good his brag, in giving all the glory and kingdoms of the world, it could not countervail the loss of the celestial kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven.

*Use II. Of reproof.*

1. *Branch.* It reproves such as do not at all look after this kingdom of glory ; as if all we say about heaven were but a



romance, they do not mind it. That they mind it not, appears, because they do not labour to have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts : if they have some thoughts of this kingdom, yet it is in a dull careless manner ; they serve God, as if they served him not ; they do not *vires exereare*, put forth their strength for the heavenly kingdom. How industrious were the saints of old for this kingdom ? Phil. iii. 13. ' Reaching forth unto those things which are before ; ' the *Greek* word is *epekteinominos*, stretching out the neck ; a metaphor from racers, that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. *Luther* spent three hours a-day in prayer ' Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day,' Luke ii. 37. How zealous and industrious were the martyrs to get into this heavenly kingdom ! they wore their fetters as ornaments, snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as *Elijah* did the fiery chariot, which came to fetch him to heaven ; and do we not think this kingdom worth our labour ? the great pains the heathens took in their Olympic race, when they ran but for a crown made of olive intermixed with gold, will rise up in judgment against such as take little or no pains in seeking after the kingdom of glory. The dulness of many in seeking after heaven is such, as if they did not believe there was such a kingdom ; or as if it would not countervail their labour ; or as if they thought it were indifferent whether they obtained this kingdom or not, which is as much as to say, whether they were saved or not ; whether they were crowned in glory, or chained as galley-slaves in hell for ever.

2. *Branch*. It reproves them who spend their sweat more in getting the world than the kingdom of heaven, Phil. iii. 19. ' Who mind earthly things.' The world is the great *Diana* they cry up, as if they would fetch happiness out of the earth which God hath cursed ; they labour for honour and riches. Many are like *Korah* and *Dathan*, the earth swallowed them up, Numb. xvi. 32. So the earth swallows up their time and thoughts : these, if they are not pagans, yet they are infidels ; they do not believe there is such a kingdom : they go for Christians, yet question that great article in their faith, *life everlasting* : these, like the serpent, lick the dust. O what is there in the world, that we should so idolize it ! when Christ and heaven are not regarded ? What hath Christ done for you ? Died for your sins : what will the world do for you ? Can it pacify an angry conscience ? Can it procure God's favour ? Can it flee death ? Can it bribe our judge ? Can it purchase for you a place in the kingdom of heaven ? O how are men bewitched with worldly profits and honours ! that for these things they will let go paradise. It was a good prayer of *St. Bernard*, *Sic*

*possideamus mundana, ut non perdamus æterna*—Lo, let us so possess things temporal, that we do not lose things eternal.

3. *Branch.* It reproves such who delay and put off seeking this kingdom till it be too late : like the foolish virgins who came when the door was shut. *Mora trahit periculum.* People let the lamp of life blaze out : and when the symptoms of death are upon them, and they know not what else to do, now will look up to the kingdom of heaven : Christ bids them seek God's kingdom first, and they will seek it last ; they put off the kingdom of heaven to a death-bed, as if it were as easy to make their peace as to make their will. How many have lost the heavenly kingdom, through delays and procrastinations ! Plutarch reports of Archias the Lacedemonian, being among his cups, one delivered him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being of serious business ; saith he, *seria cras*, I will mind serious things to-morrow ; and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, thou wilt look after the kingdom of heaven to-morrow, knowest not but that thou mayest be in hell before to-morrow : sometimes death comes suddenly, it strikes without giving warning. What folly is it putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven till the day of grace expire, till the radical moisture be spent ? as if a man should begin to run a race when a fit of the gout takes him.

4. *Branch.* It reproves such as were once great zealots in religion, and did seem to be touched with a coal from God's altar, but since they have cooled in their devotion, and have left off the pursuing the celestial kingdom, Hof. viii. 3. ' Israel hath cast off the thing that is good : ' there is no face of religion to be seen, they have left off the house of prayer, and gone to play-houses : they have left off pursuing the heavenly kingdom.

*Qu. Whence is this ?*

*Ans.* 1. For want of a supernatural principle of grace. That branch must needs die, which hath no root to grow upon. That which moves from a principle of life lasts, as the beating of the pulse : but that which moves only from an artificial spring, when the spring is done, the motion ceaseth ; the hypocrite's religion is artificial, not vital, he acts from the outward spring of applause or gain, and if that spring be down, his motion toward heaven ceaseth.

2. From unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. ' An evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God,' Pf. lxxviii. 22. ' They believed not in God.' *ver.* 41. ' They turned back.'—Sinners have hard thoughts of God, they think they may pray and hear, yet never the better, Mat. iii. 14. They question whether God will give them the kingdom at last, then they turn back, and throw away Christ's colours ; they distrust God's love, no won-

der then they desert his service ; infidelity is the root of apostacy.

3. Men leave off pursuing the heavenly kingdom ; it is from some secret lust nourished in the soul, perhaps a wanton or a covetous lust. Demas for love of the world forsook his religion, and afterwards turned priest in an idol-temple. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Covetousness will make men betray a good cause, and make shipwreck of a good conscience : if there be any lust unmortified in the soul, it will bring forth the bitter fruit either of scandal or apostacy.

4. Men leave off pursuing the kingdom of heaven out of timorousness ; if they persist in religion, they may lose their places of profit, perhaps their lives. The reason (saith Aristotle) why the camelion turns into so many colours, is through excessive fear. When carnal fear prevails, it makes men change their religion, as fast as the camelion doth its colours. Many of the Jews who were great followers of Christ, when they saw the swords and staves, deserted him. What Solomon saith of the sluggard, is as true of the coward, he saith, ' There is a lion in the way,' Prov. xxii. 13. He sees dangers before him ; he would go on in the way to the kingdom of heaven, but there is a lion in the way. This is dismal, Heb. x. 38. ' If any man draw back (in the Greek, if he steals as a foldier from his colours) my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

*Use III. Of trial.* Let us examine whether we shall go to this kingdom when we die : heaven is called ' a kingdom prepared,' Matth. xxv.

*Qu. How shall we know this kingdom is prepared for us ?*

*Ans.* If we are prepared for the kingdom.

*Qu. How may that be known ?*

*Ans.* By being heavenly persons : an earthly heart is no more fit for heaven, than a clod of dust is fit to be a star : there is nothing of Christ or grace in such an heart. It were a miracle to find a pearl in a gold mine ; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ the pearl of price in an earthly heart. Would we go to the kingdom of heaven ? Are we heavenly ?

1. Are we heavenly in our contemplations ? Do our thoughts run upon this kingdom ? Do we get sometimes upon mount Pisgah, and take a prospect of glory ? Thoughts are as travellers : most of David's thoughts travelled heaven's road, Psalm cxxxix. 17. Are our minds heavenlized ? Psalm xlviii. 12. ' Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.' Do we walk into the heavenly mount, and see what a glorious situation it is ? Do we tell the towers of that kingdom ? while a christian fixeth his thoughts on God and glory, he doth as it were tread upon the borders of the heavenly kingdom, and peep within the vail : as Moses, who had a sight

of Canaan, though he did not enter into it ; so the heavenly christian hath a sight of heaven, though he be not yet entered into it.

2. Are we heavenly in our affections ? Do we set our affections on the kingdom of heaven ? Col. iii. 2. If we are heavenly, we despise all things below in comparison of the kingdom of God ; we look upon the world but as a beautiful prison, and we cannot be much in love with our fetters, though they are made of gold ; our heart is in heaven. A stranger may be in a foreign land, to gather up his debts owing him, but he desires to be in his own kingdom and nation ; so we are here a while as in a strange land, but our desire is chiefly after the kingdom of heaven, where we shall be for ever. The world is the place of a saint's abode, not his delight : is it thus with us ? Do we, like the patriarchs of old, desire a better country, Heb. xi. 16. This is the temper of a true saint, his affections are set on the kingdom of God ; his anchor is cast in heaven, and he is carried thither with the sails of desire.

3. Are we heavenly in our speeches ? Christ after his resurrection did speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts i. 3. Are your tongues turned to the language of the heavenly Canaan ? Mal. iii. 16. ' Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.' Do you in your visits season your discourses with heaven ? There are many say, they hope they shall be saved, but you shall never hear them speak of the kingdom of heaven ; perhaps of their wares and drugs, or of some rich purchase they have got, but nothing of the kingdom. Can men travel together in a journey, and not speak a word of the place they are travelling to ? Are you travellers for heaven, and never speak a word of the kingdom you are travelling to ? Herein many discover they do not belong to heaven, for you shall never hear a good word come from them, *verba sunt specula mentis*, Bern. The words are the looking-glasses of the mind, they shew what the heart is.

4. Are we heavenly in our trading ? is our traffic and merchandize in heaven ? do we trade in the heavenly kingdom by faith ? A man may live in one place and trade in another ; he may live in Ireland and trade in the West-Indies : so, do we trade in the heavenly kingdom ? They shall never go to heaven when they die, who do not trade in heaven while they live. Do we send up to heaven volleys of sighs and groans ? do we send forth the ship of prayer thither, which fetcheth in returns of mercy ? is our communion with the Father and his Son Jesus ? 1 John i. 3. Phil. iii. 20.

5. Are our lives heavenly ? do we live as if we had seen the Lord with bodily eyes ? do we emulate and imitate the angels in sanctity ? do we labour to copy out Christ's life in ours ?

1 John ii. 6. 'Twas a custom among the Macedonians, on Alexander's birth-day, to wear his picture about their necks set with pearl and diamond : do we carry Christ's picture about us, and resemble him in the heavenliness of our conversation? If we are thus heavenly, then we shall go to the kingdom of heaven when we die : and truly there is a great deal of reason why we should be thus heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider,

(1.) The main end why God hath given us our souls, is, that we may mind the kingdom of heaven : our souls are of a noble extraction, they are akin to the angels, a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. Now, is it rational to imagine, that God would have breathed into us such noble souls only to look after sensual objects? were such bright stars made only to shoot into the earth? were these immortal souls made only to seek after dying comforts? Had this been only the end of our creation, to eat and drink, and converse with earthly objects, worle souls would have served us ; sensitive souls had been good enough for us : what need our souls be rational and divine, to do only that work which a beast may do ?

(2.) Great reason we should be heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider what a blessed kingdom heaven is ; it is beyond all hyperbole : earthly kingdoms do scarce deserve the names of cottages compared with it. We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right-foot upon the sea, and with his left-foot on the earth, Rev. x. 2. Had we but once been in the heavenly kingdom, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot on the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea? There are rivers of pleasure, gates of pearl, sparkling crowns, white robes ; may not this make our hearts heavenly ; it is an heavenly kingdom, and only such go into it as are heavenly.

*Use IV. Of exhortation.* To all in general.

1. *Branch.* If there be such a glorious kingdom to come, believe this great truth. Socinians deny it. The Rabbins say, the great dispute between Cain and Abel, was about the world to come ; Abel affirmed it, Cain denied it. This should be engraven upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond, there is a blessed kingdom in reversion, Ps. lviii. 11. ' Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous.' Let us not hesitate through unbelief ; doubting of principles is the next way to denying them. Unbelief as Samson, would pull down the pillars of religion. Be confirmed in this, there is a kingdom of glory to come ; whoever denies this, cuts asunder the main article of the creed, ' life everlasting.'

2. *Branch.* If there be such a blessed kingdom of glory to

come, let us take heed lest we miss of this kingdom ; let us fear lest we lose heaven by short shooting. Trembling, in the body a malady, in the soul a grace. This fear is not a fear of diffidence or distrust, such a fear as discourageth the soul, for such a fear frights from religion, it cuts the sinews of endeavour ; but this holy fear, lest we miss of the kingdom of heaven, is a fear of diligence : it quickens us in the use of means, and puts us forward that we may not fail of our hope, Heb. xi. 7. Noah, being moved with fear, prepared an ark. Fear is a watch-bell to awaken sleepy Christians ; it guards against security ; it is a spur to a sluggish heart : he who fears he shall come short of his journey, rides the faster. And indeed this exhortation to fear, lest we miss of this kingdom, is most necessary, if we consider two things ;

*First*, There are many who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have fallen short of it, Mark xii. 34. ‘ Thou art not far from the kingdom of God ;’ yet he was not near enough.

*Qu.* *How many steps may a man take in the way to the kingdom of God, yet miss of it ?*

*Ans.* 1. He may be adorned with civility, he may be morally righteous, he may be prudent, just, temperate, he may be free from penal statutes ; this is good, but not enough to bring a man to heaven.

2. He may hang out the flag of a glorious profession, yet fall short of the kingdom. The scribes and pharisees went far ; they sat in Moses’ chair, were expounders of the law ; they prayed, gave alms, were strict in the observation of the sabbath ; if one had got a thorn into his foot, they would not pull it out on the sabbath-day, for fear of breaking the sabbath ; they were so externally devout in God’s worship, that the Jews thought, that if but two in all the world went to heaven, the one should be a scribe and the other a Pharisee : but the mantle of their profession was not lined with sincerity : they did all for the applause of men, therefore they missed of heaven, Matth. v. 20. ‘ Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.’

3. A man may be a frequenter of ordinances, and yet miss of the kingdom. It is a good sight to see people flock as doves to the windows of God’s house ; it is good to lie in the way where Christ passeth by : yet, be not offended, if I say, one may be an hearer of the word, and fall short of glory ; Herod heard John Baptist gladly, yet beheaded John, instead of beheading his sin : the prophet Ezekiel’s hearers did come with as much delight to his preaching, as one would do to a fit of music, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. ‘ Thou art to them as a lovely song of one that hath

a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; they hear thy words, but they do them not.' What is it to hear one's duty, and not do it? As if a physician prescribe a good receipt, but the patient doth not take it.

4. A man may have some trouble for sin, and weep for it, yet miss of the heavenly kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. A sinner's tears are forced by God's judgments; as water which comes out of a still is forced by the fire. 2. Trouble for sin is transient, it is quickly over again. As some that go to sea are sea-sick, but when they come to land they are well again: so hypocrites may be sermon-sick, but this trouble doth not last, the sick-fit is soon over. 3. A sinner weeps, but goes on in sin; his sins are not drowned in his tears.

5. A man may have good desires, yet miss of the kingdom, Numb. xxiii. 10. 'O that I might die the death of the righteous!'

Qu. *Wherein do these desires come short?*

Ans. 1. They are sluggish. A man would have heaven, but will take no pains. As if one should say, he desires water, but will not let down the bucket into the well, Prov. xxi. 25. 'The desire of the slothful kills him, his hands refuse to labour.' 2. The sinner desires mercy, but not grace; he desires Christ as a Saviour, but not as he is the Holy One; he desires Christ only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven. Such desires as these may be found among the damned.

6. A man may forsake his sins, oaths, drunkenness, uncleanness, yet come short of the kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. He may forsake gross sins, yet he hath no reluctance against heart-sins, pride, unbelief, and the first risings of malice and concupiscence. Though he dams up the stream, yet he lets alone the fountain; though he lop and prune the branches, yet he doth not strike at the root of it. 2. Though he leaves sin (for fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury) yet he still loves sin, as if a snake should cast her coat, yet keep her poison, Hos. iv. 8. 'They set their heart on their iniquity.' 3. It is but a partial forsaking of sin; though he leaves one sin, he lives in some other. Herod reformed very much, Mark vi. 10. 'He did many things;' but he lived in incest. Some leave drunkenness, and live in covetousness; they forbear swearing, and live in slandering. It is but a partial reformation, and so they miss of the kingdom of glory. Thus you see there are some who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have come short. Some have gone so far in profession, that they have been confident their estate hath been good, and they shall go to the kingdom of heaven, yet have missed it, Luke xiii. 25.

‘ When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.’ How confident were these of salvation ! they did not beseech, but knock, as if they did not doubt but to be let into heaven ; yet to these Christ saith, ‘ I know you not whence you are ; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.’ Therefore fear and tremble, lest any of us miss of this kingdom of heaven.

*Secondly*, This fear is necessary, if we consider what a loss it is to lose the heavenly kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven : they who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose God’s sweet presence, the ravishing views and smiles of God’s glorious face. God’s presence is the diamond in the ring of glory, Ps. xvi. 12. ‘ In his presence is fulness of joy.’ If God be the fountain of all bliss, then, to be separated from him, is the fountain of all misery. They who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose the society of angels ; and, what sweeter music, than to hear them praise God in concert ? They lose all their treasure, their white robes, their sparkling crowns ; they lose their hopes, Job viii. 14. ‘ Whose hope shall be cut off.’ Their hope is not an anchor, but a spider’s web. If hope deferred makes the heart sick, Prov. xiii. 12. what then is hope disappointed ? They lose the end of their being. Why were they created, but to be enthroned in glory ? Now, to lose this, is to lose the end of their being, as if an angel should be turned to a worm. There are many aggravations of the loss of this heavenly kingdom.

1. The eyes of the wicked shall be opened to see their loss ; now they care not for the loss of God’s favour, because they know not the worth of it. A man that loseth a rich diamond, and took it but for an ordinary stone, is not much troubled at the loss of it ; but when he comes to know what a jewel he lost, then he laments. He, whose heart would never break at the sight of his sins, shall now break at the sight of his loss. Phinehas his daughter, when she heard the ark was lost, cried out, ‘ The glory is departed,’ 1 Sam. iv. 21. When the sinner sees what he hath lost, he hath lost the beatifical vision, he hath lost the kingdom of heaven ; now he will cry out in horror and despair, “ The glory, the everlasting glory is departed.”

2. A second aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, that sinners shall be upbraided by their own conscience : this is the ‘ worm that never dies,’ Mark. ix. 44. viz. a self-accusing mind. When sinners shall consider they were in a fair way to the kingdom ; they had a possibility of salvation, though the door of heaven was strait, yet it was open ; they had the means of grace ; the jubilee of the gospel was proclaimed in their ears ; God called, but they refused ; Jesus Christ offered



them a plaister of his own blood to heal them, but they trampled it under foot : the Holy Spirit stood at the door of their heart, knocking and crying to them to receive Christ and heaven, but they repulsed the Spirit, and sent away this dove ; and now they have, through their own folly and wilfulness, lost the kingdom of heaven : this self-accusing conscience will be terrible ; like a venomous worm gnawing at the heart.

3. A third aggravation of the loss of heaven will be, to look upon others that have gained the kingdom ; the happiness of the blessed will be an eye-sore, Luke xiii. 28. ' There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.' When the wicked shall see those whom they hated and scorned, to be exalted to a kingdom, and shine with robes of glory, and they, themselves mills of the kingdom, this will be a dagger at the heart, and make them gnash their teeth for envy.

4. A fourth aggravation is, this loss of the kingdom of heaven is accompanied with the punishment of sense. He who leaps short of the bank, falls into the river ; such as come short of heaven, fall into the river of fire and brimstone. Pl. xc. 17. ' The wicked shall be turned into hell : ' and how dreadful is that ! if, when but a spark of God's anger lights into the conscience here, it is so torturing, what will it be to have mountains of God's wrath thrown upon the soul ? Pl. xc. 11. ' Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? ' The angel never poured out his vial ; but some wo followed, Rev. xvi. 3. When the bitter vials of God's wrath are poured out, damnation follows. Dives cries out, ' O I am tormented in this flame,' Luke xvi. 24. In hell there is not a drop of mercy. There was no oil nor frankincense used in the sacrifice of jealousy, Num. v. 15. In hell no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, nor incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

5. A fifth aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, to consider on what easy and reasonable terms men might have had this kingdom. If indeed God had commanded impossibilities, to have satisfied justice in their own persons, it had been another matter ; but what God did demand was reasonable, only to do that which was for their good, to accept of Christ for their Lord and husband, only to part with that which would damn them, if they kept their sins ; these were the fair terms on which they might have enjoyed the heavenly kingdom : now, to lose heaven, which might have been had upon such easy terms, will be a cutting aggravation ; it will rend a sinner's heart with rage and grief, to think how easily he might have prevented the loss of the heavenly kingdom.

6. It will be an aggravation of the loss of heaven, for sinners

to think how active they were in doing that which lost them the kingdom; they were *felo de se*. What pains did they take to resist the Spirit, to fluster conscience? They sinned while they were out of breath, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' What difficulties did men go through? What did they endure for their sins? how much shame and pain? how sick was the drunkard with his cups? how sore in the body was the adulterer? and what marks of sin did he carry about him? what dangers did men adventure upon for their lusts? They adventure God's wrath, and adventured the laws of the land. O how will this aggravate the loss of heaven! how will this make men curse themselves, to think how much pains they were at to lose happiness? how will this sting men's consciences, to think, had they but taken as much pains for heaven as they did for hell, they had not lost it.

7. Aggravation of the loss of this kingdom, it will be an eternal irreparable loss; heaven, once lost, can never be recovered. Worldly losses may be made up again: if a man lose his health, he may have it repaired by physic; if a man be driven out of his kingdom, he may be restored to it again, as king Nebuchadnezzar was, Dan. iv. 36. 'My honour is returned to me, and I was established in my kingdom.' King Henry VI was deposed from his throne, yet restored again to it. But they who once lose heaven, can never be restored to it again: after millions of years, they are as far from obtaining glory as at first. Thus you see how needful this exhortation is, that we should fear lest we fall short of this kingdom of heaven.

Qu. *What shall we do, that we may not miss of this kingdom of glory?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things which will make you miss of heaven. 1. Take heed of spiritual sloth. Many Christians are settled upon their lees, they are loth to put themselves to too much pains. It is said of Israel, 'They despised the pleasant land,' Ps. cvi. 24. Canaan was a paradise of delights, a type of heaven: ay, but some of the Jews thought it would cost them a great deal of trouble and hazard in the getting, and they would rather go without it; 'They despised the pleasant land.' I have read of certain Spaniards that live where there is great store of fish, yet are so lazy, that they will not be at the pains to catch them but buy of their neighbours; such a sinful sloth is upon the most, that though the kingdom of heaven be offered to them, yet they will not put themselves to any labour for it. They have some faint velleities and desires, O that I had this kingdom! Like a man that wisheth for venison, but will not hunt for it, Prov. xiii. 4. 'The soul of the sluggard wisheth, and hath nothing.' Men could be content to have the kingdom of heaven, if it would drop as a ripe fig into their

mouth, but they are loth to fight for it. O take heed of spiritual sloth; God never made heaven to be a hive for drones. We cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have the kingdom of heaven? Heathens will rise up in judgment against many Christians: what pains did they take in their Olympic races, when they ran but for a crown of olive or myrtle intermixed with gold; and do we stand still when we are running for a kingdom? Prov. xix. 15. 'Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.' Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam lost his rib when he was asleep. Many a man loseth the kingdom of heaven when he is in this deep sleep of sloth.

2. Take heed of unbelief. Unbelief kept Israel out of Canaan, Heb. iii. 19. 'So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief.' And it keeps many out of heaven. Unbelief is an enemy to salvation, it is a damning sin; it whispers thus, To what purpose is all this pains for the heavenly kingdom? I had as good sit still; I may come near to heaven, yet come short of heaven, Jer. xviii. 12. 'And they said, there is no hope.' Unbelief destroys hope; and if you once cut this sinew, a christian goes but lamely in religion, if he goes at all. Unbelief raiseth jealous thoughts of God, it represents him as a severe judge; this discourageth many a soul, and takes it off from duty. Beware of unbelief; believe the promises, James iii. 24. 'God is good to the soul that seeks him;' seek him earnestly and he will open both heart and heaven to you. *Deus volentibus non deeft.* Do what you are able, and God will help you. While you spread the sails of your endeavour, God's Spirit will blow upon these sails, and carry you swiftly to the kingdom of glory.

3. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of mistake, imagining the way to the kingdom of heaven to be easier than it is; it is but a sigh, or, Lord have mercy. There is no going to heaven *per saltum*: one cannot leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. The sinner is 'dead in trespasses,' Eph. ii. 1. Is it easy for a dead man to restore himself to life? is regeneration easy? are there no pangs in the new birth? doth not the scripture call Christianity a warfare and a race? and; do you fancy this easy? The way to the kingdom is not easy, but the mistake about the way is easy.

4. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of delays and procrastinations. *Mora trahit periculum.* It is an usual delusion, I will mind the kingdom of heaven, but not yet; when I have gotten an estate and grown old, then I will look after heaven: and, on a sudden, death surprizeth men, and they fall short of heaven. Delay strengtheus sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man. Take heed of adjourning and putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven, till it be too late. Cæsar, deferring to read a letter put into his

hand, was killed in the senate house. Consider how short your life is ; it is a taper soon blown out. *Animantis conjusque vita in fuga est.* The body is like a vessel tuned with breath, sickness broacheth it, death draws it out. Delay not the business of salvation a day longer ; sometimes death strikes, and gives no warning.

5. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of prejudice. Many take a prejudice at religion, and on this rock dash their souls. They are prejudiced at Christ's person, his truths, his followers, his ways.

(1.) They are prejudiced at his person, Mat. xiii. 57. 'And they were offended in him.' What is there in Christ, that men should be offended at him ? He is the 'pearl of price,' Matth. xiii. 46. Are men offended at pearls and diamonds ? Christ is the wonder of beauty, Psal. xlv. 2. 'Fairer than the children of men.' Is there any thing in beauty to offend ? Christ is the mirror of mercy, Heb. ii. 17. Why should mercy offend any ? Christ is a Redeemer ; why should a captive slave be offended at him who comes with a sum of money to ransom him ? the prejudice men take at Christ is from the inbred privy of their hearts. The eye that is sore cannot endure the light of the sun ; the fault is not in the sun, but in the sore eye. There are two things in Christ men are prejudiced at : 1. His meanness. The Jews expected a monarch for their Messiah, but Christ came not with outward pomp and splendor : 'his kingdom was not of this world.' The stars which are seated in the lightest orbs, are least seen : Christ, who is the bright morning star, was not much seen ; his divinity was hid in the dark lanthorn of his humanity ; all who saw the man did not see the Messiah ; this the Jews stumbled at, the meanness of his person. 2. Men are prejudiced at Christ's strictness ; they look upon Christ as austere, and his laws too severe, Ps. ii. 3. 'Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us.' Though, to a saint, Christ's laws are no more burdensome than wings are to a bird ; yet, to the wicked, Christ's laws are a yoke, and they love not to come under restraint : hence it is they hate Christ. Though they pretend to love him as a Saviour, yet they hate him as he is the holy One.

(2.) Men are prejudiced at the truths of Christ. 1. Self-denial. A man must deny his righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. His duties and moralities : he will graft the hope of salvation upon the stock of his own righteousness. 2. He must deny his unrighteousness. The scripture seals no patents for sin : it teacheth us to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Tit. ii. 11. We must divorce those sins which bring in pleasures and profit. 3. Forgiving of injuries, Mark xi. 25. These truths men are

prejudiced at ; they can rather want forgiveness from God, than they can forgive others.

(3.) Men are prejudiced at the followers of Christ. 1. Their paucity ; there are but few (in comparison) that embrace Christ : but why should this offend ? Men are not offended at pearls and precious stones, because they are but few. 2. Their poverty ; many that wear Christ's livery are low in the world ; but why should this give offence ? 1<sup>st</sup>, Christ hath better things than these to bestow upon his followers ; the holy anointing, the white stone, the hidden manna, the crown of glory. 2<sup>dly</sup>, All Christ's followers are not humbled with poverty : Abraham was rich with gold and silver, as well as rich in faith : though not many noble are called, yet some noble, Acts xvii. 12. 'Honourable women which were Greeks believed,' Constantine and Thodofius were godly emperors. So that this stumbling-block is removed. 3. Their scandals. Some of Christ's followers, under a mask of piety, commit sin ; this begets a prejudice against religion ; but doth Christ or his gospel teach any such thing ? The rules he prescribes are holy ; why should the master be thought the worse of, because some of his servants prove bad ?

(4.) Men are prejudiced at the ways of Christ ; they expose them to sufferings, Mat. xvi. 24. 'Let him take up his cross and follow me.' Many stumble at the cross. There are, as Tertullian, *delicatuli*, silken Christians, who love their ease ; They will follow Christ to mount Olivet, to see him transfigured, but not to mount Golgotha, to suffer with him. But, alas, what is affliction to the glory that follows ! The weight of glory makes affliction light. *Adimant caput non coronum*. O take heed of prejudice ; this hath been a stumbling-stone in men's way to heaven, and hath made them fall short of the kingdom.

6. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of presumption. Men presume all is well, and take it as a principle not to be disputed, that they shall go to heaven. The devil hath given them opium, to cast them into a deep sleep of security. The presumptuous sinner is like the leviathan, 'made without fear ;' he lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes he shall be saved as well as the best ; 'he blesteth himself and saith, he shall have peace, though he goes on in sin,' Deut. xxix. 19. As if a man should drink poison, yet not fear but he should have his health. But whence doth this presumptuous hope arise ? Surely from a conceit that God is made up all of mercy. It is true, God is merciful, but with all he is just too, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 'Keeping mercy for thousands, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' If a king proclaim, that only those should be pardoned, who came in and submitted ; should any, still persisting in rebellion, claim the benefit of that

pardon, dost thou hope for mercy, who will not lay down thy weapons, but stand out in rebellion against heaven? none might touch the ark but the priests; none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but holy, consecrated persons. Presumption is *heluo animarum*, the great devourer of souls. A thousand have misused of heaven by putting on the broad spectacles of presumption.

7. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of the delights and pleasures of the flesh: soft pleasures harden the heart, many people cannot endure a serious thought, but are for comedies and romances; they play away their salvation. *Homines capiuntur voluptate, ut pisces homo*, Cicero. Pleasure is the sugared bait men bite at, but there is an hook under, Job xxi. 12. 'They take the timbrel and harp; and rejoice at the sound of the organ.' And a parallel scripture, Amos vi. 4. 'That lie upon beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments.' The pleasures of the world do keep many from the pleasures of paradise. What a shame is it, that the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is akin to angels, should be enslaved by sinful pleasure! Beard, in his theatre, speaks of one who had a room richly hung with fair pictures, he had most delicious music, he had the rarest beauties, he had all the candies, and curious preserves of the confectioner; thus did he gratify his senses with pleasure, and swore he would live one week as a god, though he were sure to be damned in hell the next day. Diodorus Siculus observes, that the dogs of Sicily, while they are hunting among the sweet flowers, lose the scent of the hare; so many, while they are hunting after the sweet pleasures of the world, lose the kingdom of heaven. It is (saith Theophylact) one of the worst fights, to see a sinner go laughing to hell.

8. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven; take heed of worldly mindedness: a covetous spirit is a dunghill spirit, it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world hindered the young man from following Christ, *abiit tristis*, he went away sorrowful, Luke xviii. 23. which extorted these words from our Saviour, ver. 24. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?' *Divitiae saeculi sunt laquei diaboli*, Bern. Riches are golden snares. If a man were to climb up a steep rock, and had weights tied to his legs, it would hinder him from his ascent: too many golden weights will hinder him from climbing up that steep rock which leads to heaven, Exod. xiv. 3. 'They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.' So it may be said of many, they are entangled in earthly affairs, the world hath shut them in; the world is no friend to grace; the more the child

sucks the weaker the nurse is : and the more the world sucks and draws from us, the weaker our grace is, 1 John ii. 15. ' Love not the world.' Had a man a monopoly of all the wealth of the world : were he able to empty the western parts of gold, and the eastern of spices ; could he heap up riches to the starry heaven, yet his heart would not be filled ; covetousness is a dry dropfy. Joshua who could stop the course of the sun, could not stop Achan in his covetous pursuit of the wedge of gold ; he whose heart is locked up in his chest, will be locked out of heaven. Some ships that have escaped the rocks, have been cast away upon the sands ; many, who have escaped gross sins, have been cast upon the world's golden sands.

9. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of indulging any sin ; one milstone will drown, as well as more ; and one sin lived in will damn, as well as more. *Ubi regnat peccatum, non potest regnare dei regnum*, Hierom. If any one sin reign, it will keep you from reigning in the kingdom of heaven. Especially keep from sins of presumption, which waste conscience, *Vastare contientiam*, Tertul. And the sin of your natural constitution ; the *peccatum in delitiis*, Aug. Thy darling sin, Ps. xviii. 23. ' I have kept myself from mine iniquity,' that sin which my heart would soonest decoy and flatter me into. As in the hive there is one master-bee, so in the heart one master sin ; O take heed of this !

Qu. *How may this sin be known ?*

Ans. (1.) That sin which a man cannot endure, the arrow of reproof should shoot at, that is the bosom sin : Herod could not brook to have his incest meddled with, that was a *noli me tangere* ; men cannot be content to have other sins declaimed against, but if a minister put his finger upon the sore, and toucheth upon one special sin, then *igne mecant oculi*, they are enraged, and spit the venom of malice.

2. That sin which a man's heart runs out most to, and he is most easily captivated by, that is the *Dalilah* in the bosom. One man is overcome with wantonness, another by worldliness. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a beloved sin, that if it ask him to part with not only one half the kingdom, but the whole kingdom of heaven, he must part with it to gratify that lust.

3. That sin which doth most trouble a man and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the sin he hath allowed himself in, and is his complexion sin ; when Joseph's brethren were distressed, their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, Gen. xlii. 21. ' We were verily guilty concerning our brother,' &c. So when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, thou hast been guilty of such a sin, the sin of flandering or uncleanness, conscience reads

a man a sad lecture ; it affrights him most for one sin, that is the complexion sin.

4. That sin which a man is lothest to part with ; that is the endeared sin : Jacob could of all his sons most hardly part with Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 35. ‘ Will ye take Benjamin away ? ’ So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have left, but must Benjamin go too ? must I part with this delightful sin ? That goes to the heart. As it is with a castle that hath several forts about it ; the first and second forts are yielded ; but when it comes to the main castle, the governor will rather fight and die than yield that ; so a man may suffer some of his sins to be demolished ; but when it comes to one, that is like the taking of the castle, he will never yield to part with that ; surely that is the master-sin. Take heed especially of this sin ; the strength of sin lies in the beloved sin : that is like an humour striking to the heart, which brings death. I have read of a monarch, that being pursued by the enemy, he threw away the crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faster ; so that sin, which thou didst wear as a crown of gold, throw it away, that thou mayest run the faster to the kingdom of heaven : O, if you would not lose glory, mortify the beloved sin ; set it, as Uriah, in the forefront of the battle to be slain : by plucking out this right-eye you shall see the better to go to heaven.

10. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of inordinate passion ; many a ship hath been lost in a storm, and many a soul hath been lost in a storm of unruly passions. Every member of the body is infected with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter ; but, ‘ the tongue is full of deadly poison,’ James iii. 8. Some care not what they say in their passion ; they will censure, slander, with evil to others : how can Christ be in the heart, when the devil hath taken possession of the tongue ? Passion disturbs reason, it is *brevis infania*, a short frenzy. Jonah in a passion flies out against God, Jon. iv. 9. ‘ I do well to be angry to the death.’ What, to be angry with God, and to justify it ? ‘ I do well to be angry ; ’ the man was not well in his wits, passion unfits for prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 8. ‘ I will, therefore, that men pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath.’ He that prays in wrath, may lift up his hands in prayer, but he doth not lift up holy hands. Water, when it is hot, soon boils over ; so, when the heart is heated with anger, it soon boils over in fiery passionate speeches. Some curse others in their passion : they whose tongues are set on fire, let them take heed that they do not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool their tongue. O, if you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, beware of giving way to your unbirdled passions. Some say, words are but wind ; but they are such a wind as may blow them to hell.



11. If you would not fall short of the heavenly kingdom, beware of too much indulging the sensual appetite, Rom. xiii.

14. 'Make no provision for the flesh.' The Greek word, *pro-noian poiein*, to make provision, signifies to be caterers for the flesh, Phil. iii. 19. 'Whose god is their belly.' The throat is a slippery place; Judas received the devil in the sop; and often the devil slides down in the liquor: excess in meat and drink clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust; many a man digs his own grave with his teeth: the heathens could say, *magnus sum & ad moxora natus quam ut sim corporis mei mancipium*, Sen. He was higher born than to be a slave to his body. To pamper the body, and neglect the soul, is to feed the slave, and to starve the wife. Take such a proportion of food as may recruit nature, not surfeit it: excess in things lawful hath lost many the kingdom of heaven. A bee may suck a little honey from the leaf, but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned; to suck temperately from the creature, God allows; but excess ingulphs men in perdition.

12. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of injustice in your dealings; defrauding lies in two things, *first*, Mixing commodities: as if one mix bad wheat with good, and sell it for pure wheat, this is to defraud, Isa. i. 22. 'Thy wine is mixed with water.' *Second*, Giving scant measure, Amos v. 8. 'Making the ephah small.' Ephah was a measure which the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, they scarce gave measure. I wish this be not the sin of many, Hof. xii. 7. 'He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.' Can they be holy, which are not just? Micah vi. 11. 'Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances?' Is his heart sincere, who hath false weights? This hath made many they could not reach heaven, because of their over-reaching.

13. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of evil company: there is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, else, as the apostle saith, 'We must go out of the world,' 1 Cor. v. 10. but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked, 1 Cor. v. 11. 'I have written to you not to keep company.' Do not incorporate into the society of the wicked, or be too much familiar with them: the wicked are God haters; and 2 Chron. xix. 2. 'Shouldst thou join with them that hate the Lord?' A Christian is bound by virtue of his oath of allegiance to God in baptism, not to have intimate converse with such as are God's sworn enemies; it is a thing of bad report: what doth Christ's dove among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots. The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague, Prov. vi. 27. 'He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled,' Psal.

cvi. 35. 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Such as have had religious education, and have some inclinations to good, yet by mixing among the wicked, they will be apt to receive hurt; the bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad. Pharaoh learned Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not learn Pharaoh to pray. There is a strange attractive power in ill company to corrupt and poison the best dispositions; they damp good affections. Throw a fire ball into the snow, and it is soon quenched. Among the wicked you lose your heat of zealous affections: by holding familiar correspondence with the wicked, one shall hear them dissuading him from strict godliness, that it will debar him of his liberty and pleasure, Acts xxviii. 2. 'This sect is every where spoken against.' Hereupon he, who before did look towards heaven, begins to be discouraged, and gradually declines from goodness.

(1.) There steals upon him a dislike of his former religious course of life; that he was righteous over-much, stricter than needed.

(2.) There is instilled into his heart a secret delight of evil: he begins to like foolish scurrilous discourse: he can hear religion spoken against, and be silent, nay, well pleased; he loves vanity, and makes sport of sin.

(3.) He is by degrees so metamorphosed, and made like the company he conversed with, that he now grows into a disgust, and hatred of his former sober ways; he is ill-affected towards good men, he is transformed into scoffing Ishmael, a breathing devil; and becomes at last as much the child of hell, as any of that graceless damned crew he conversed with: and what is the end of all? A blot in the name, a moth in the estate, a worm in the conscience. O, if you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, beware of evil company. Bad company is the bane and poison of the youth of this age: such as were once soberly inclined, yet by coming among the profane, they grow familiar, till at last they keep one another company in hell.

14. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of parlying with the fleshly part; the flesh is a bosom traitor. When an enemy is gotten within the walls of a castle, it is in great danger to be taken. The flesh is an enemy within: the flesh is a bad counsellor: the flesh saith, There is a lion in the way; it discourageth from a religious strictness, the flesh saith, as Peter did to Christ, 'spare thyself;' the flesh saith, as Judas, 'what needs all this waste?' What needs this praying? Why do you waste your strength and spirits in religion? What

needs all this waste ? The flesh cries out for ease and pleasure. How many, by consulting with the flesh, have lost the kingdom of heaven !

15. If you would not fall short of heaven, take heed of carnal relations : our carnal friends are often bars and blocks in our way to heaven : they will say religion is preciseness and singularity. A wife in the bosom may be a tempter ; Job's wife was so, Job ii. 9. ' Dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Curse God, and die.' What, still pray ? What dost thou get by serving God ? Job, where are thy earnings ? What canst thou shew thou hast had in God's service, but boils and ulcers ? And dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Throw off God's livery, renounce religion. Here was a temptation handed over to him by his wife : the woman was made of the rib, the devil turned this rib into an arrow, and would have shot Job to the heart, but his faith quenched this fiery dart. Beware of carnal relations : we read that some of Christ's kindred laid hold on him, and would have hindered him when he was going to preach, Mark iii. 21. ' They said, he is beside himself.' Our kindred sometimes would stand in our way to heaven, and, judging all zeal, rashness, would hinder us from being saved : such carnal relations Spira had ; for, advising with them whether he should remain constant in his orthodox opinion, they persuaded him to recant : and so, abjuring his former faith, he fell into horror and despondency of mind. Galeacius, marquis of Vico, found his carnal relations a great block in his way ; and what ado had he to break through their tentations ? Take heed of a snare in your bosom. It is a brave saying of Jerom, *si mater mihi ubera ostendat, &c.* " If my parent should persuade me to deny Christ, if my mother should shew me her breast, that gave me suck, if my wife should go to charm me with her embraces, I would forsake all, and fly to Christ."

16. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of falling off : beware of apostacy ; he misseth of the prize, who doth not hold out in the race ; he who makes shipwreck of faith, cannot come to the haven of glory. We live in the fall of the leaf : men fall from that goodness they seemed to have ; some are turned to error, others to vice ; some to drinking and dicing, and others to whoring, the very mantle of their profession is fallen off. It is dreadful for men to fall off from hopeful beginnings. The apostate, (saith Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and, having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master ; in which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame, Heb. vi. 6. This is sad at last, Heb. x. 38. If you would not miss of the glory, take heed of apos-

tacy ; those who fall away, must needs fall short of the kingdom.

1. If we would not come short of this heavenly kingdom, let us be much in the exercise of self-denial, Matth. xvi. 24. ‘ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.’ He who would go to heaven must deny self-righteousness. *Covendum est a propria justitia* : Phil. iii. 9. ‘ That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.’ The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels ; an hypocrite would spin a web of salvation out of his own righteousness, we must deny our civility in point of justification. Civility is a good staff to walk with among men, but it is a bad ladder to climb up to heaven. We must deny our holy things in point of justification. Alas, how are our duties chequered with sin ! put gold in the fire, and there comes out dross ; our most golden services are mixed with unbelief. Deny self-righteousness ; use duty, but trust to Christ. Noah’s dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety : let duties have your diligence, but not your confidence. Self-denial is *via ad regnum* ; there is no getting into heaven, but through this strait gate to self-denial.

2. The second means for the obtaining of the kingdom, is serious consideration ; most men fall short of heaven for want of consideration.

1. *Consideration.* We should often consider what a kingdom heaven is : it is called *regnum paratum*, a kingdom prepared, Matth. xxv. 34. which implies something that is rare and excellent. God hath prepared in his kingdom, ‘ such things as eye hath not seen nor ear heard,’ 1 Cor. ii. 9. Heaven is beyond all hyperbole. In particular, in this celestial kingdom are two things. (1.) A stately palace. (1.) A royal feast.

(1.) A stately palace. (1.) It is large, and hath several stories : for the dimensions of it, it is twelve thousand furlongs, Rev. xxi. 15. Or, as it is in some Greek copies, twelve times twelve thousand furlongs : a finite number put for an infinite ; no arithmetician can number these furlongs : though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, yet there is infinitely enough of room to receive them. (2.) The palace of this kingdom is lucid and transparent ; it is adorned with light, the light is sweet. Hell is a dark dungeon, but the palace above is bespangled with light, Col. i. 12. Such illustrious beams of glory shine from God, as shed a brightness and splendor upon the empyrean heaven. (3.) This palace of the kingdom is well situated for a good air and a pleasant prospect : there is the best air, which is perfumed with the odours of Christ’s ointments ; and a most pleasant prospect of the bright morning-star. (4.) The palace is rich and sumptuous ; it hath gates of pearl, Rev. xxi. 21. It is enriched with white robes

and crowns of glory ; and this palace never falls to decay, and the dwellers in it never die, Rev. xxii. 5. ‘ They shall reign for ever and ever.’

(2.) A royal feast. It is called ‘ the marriage-supper of the Lamb,’ Rev. xix. 9. Which Bullinger and Gregory the great, understand of the magnificent supper prepared in the kingdom of heaven. A glorious feast it will be, in respect of the founder God ; the glorified saints shall feast their eyes with God’s beauty, and their hearts with his love ; a delicious feast it will be, in respect of the festivity and holy mirth ; what joy when there shall be the anthems and triumphs of glorified spirits ? When saints and angels shall twist together in an inseparable union of love, and lie in each others sweet embraces : a royal banquet it shall be, where there is no surfeit, because continually a fresh course is served in. The serious consideration what a kingdom heaven is, would be a means to quicken our endeavours in the pursuit after it. What causeth men to make voyages to the Indies, but the consideration of the gold and spices which are to be had there ? Did we survey and contemplate the glory of heaven, we would soon take a voyage, and never leave till we had arrived at the celestial kingdom.

2. *Consideration.* How it will trouble you, if you should perish, to think you came short of heaven for want of a little more pains. The prophet Elisha bid the king of Israel smite the ground six times, and he smote but thrice, and stayed, 2 Kings xiii. 19. And he lost many victories by it ; so, when a man shall think thus, I did something in religion, but did not do enough ; I prayed, but it was coldly ; I did not put coals to the incense ; I heard the word, but did not meditate on it, I did not chew the cud ; I smote but thrice, and I should have smitten six times ; had I taken a little more pains, I had been happy, but I have lost the kingdom of heaven by short-shooting : the consideration how terrible the thoughts of this will be, that we should lose heaven for want of a little more pains, will be a means to spur on our sluggish hearts, and make us more diligent to get the kingdom.

3. The third means for obtaining this kingdom, is to keep up daily prayer, Ps. cix. 4. ‘ I give myself to prayer,’ Prayer inflames the affections, and oils the wheels of endeavour : prayer prevails with God, it unlocks his bowels, and then he unlocks heaven ; all that have got to heaven, have crept thither upon their knees : the saints now in heaven, have been men of prayer : Daniel prayed three times a day, Jacob wrestled with God in prayer, and as a prince prevailed : this prayer must be fervent, else it is *thuribulum sine prunis*, as Luther, a golden censer without fire. O follow God with prayers and tears ; say as Jacob to the angel, Gen. xxxii. 26. ‘ I will not let thee

go, except thou bleſs me.' Prayer *vincit invincibilem*, Luther ; it conquers the Omnipotent. Elijah by prayer, opened heaven ; by ardent and conſtant prayer, heaven is at laſt opened to us.

4. If you would obtain the heavenly kingdom, get a love to heaven. Love puts a man upon the uſe of all means to enjoy the thing loved. He that loves the world, how active is he ? He will break his ſleep and peace for it ; he that loves honour, what hazards will he run ? He will ſwim to the throne in blood. Jacob loved Rachel, and what would not he do, though it were ſerving a two ſeven-years apprenticeship for obtaining her ? Love carries a man out violently to the object loved. Love is like wings to the bird, like ſails to the ſhip, it carries a Chriſtian full-ſail to heaven ; heaven is a place of reſt and joy, it is paradise, and will you not love it ? Love heaven, and you cannot miſs it : love breaks through all oppoſition, it takes heaven by ſtorm : love, though it labour, is never weary ; it is like the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which makes him freſh and lively in his travel, and keeps him from being weary.

5. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, make religion your buſineſs. What a man looks upon as a *parergon*, a thing by the bye, he doth not much mind. If ever we would have heaven, we muſt look upon it as our main concern, other things do but concern our livelihood, this concerns our ſalvation ; then we make religion our buſineſs, when we wholly devote ourſelves to God's ſervice, Pl. cxxxix. 18. We count thoſe the beſt hours which are ſpent with God ; we give God the cream of our affections, the flower of our time and ſtrength ; we traffic in heaven every day, we are merchants for the ' pearl of price.' He will not get an eſtate, who doth not mind his trade ; he will never get heaven, who doth not make religion his main buſineſs.

6. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, bind your hearts to God by ſacred vows. Vow to the Lord, (that by his grace) you will be more intent upon heaven than ever, Pl. lvi. 12. 'Thy vows are upon me, O God.' A vow binds the votary to duty ; he looks upon himſelf as obliged by his vow to cleave to God. Bees when they fly in a great wind, ballaſt themſelves with little ſtones, that they may not be carried away with the wind ; ſo we muſt fortify ourſelves with ſtrong vows, that we may not be carried away from God with the violent wind of temptation. No queſtion, a Chriſtian may make ſuch a vow, becauſe the ground of it is morally good : he vows nothing but what he is bound to do by virtue of his baptiſmal vow, namely to walk with God more cloſely, and to purſue heaven more vigorously.

7. If you would obtain the kingdom, embrace all ſeaſons and opportunities for your ſouls, Eph. v. 5. 'Redeeming the time.'

Opportunity is the cream of time ; the improving the seasons of grace is as much as our salvation is worth. The mariner, by taking the present season, while the wind blows, gets to the haven ; by taking the season, while we have the means of grace, and the wind of the Spirit blows, we may arrive at the kingdom of heaven. We know not how long we shall enjoy the gospel ; the seasons of grace, like Noah's dove, come with an olive branch in their mouth, but they soon take wings and fly. Though they are sweet, yet swift. God may remove the golden candlestick from us, as he did from the churches of Asia. We have many sad symptoms, ' Grey hairs are here and there upon us,' Hos. vii. 9. Therefore let us lay hold upon the present seasons ; they that sleep in seed time, will beg in harvest.

8. If you would go to the kingdom of heaven, you must *excubias agere*, keep a daily watch, Mark xiii. 37. ' I say unto all, watch.' Many have lost heaven for want of watchfulness. Our hearts are ready to decoy us into sin, and the devil lies in ambush by his temptations ; we must every day set a spy ; and keep sentinel in our souls, Hab. ii. 1. ' I will stand upon my watch.'

(1.) We must watch our eyes, Job xxxi. 1. ' I made a covenant with my eyes.' Much sin comes in by the eye : When Eve saw the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, ' then she took,' Gen. iii. 6. First she looked, and then she lustied : the eye by beholding an impure object, sets the heart on fire : the devil oft creeps in at the window of the eye. Watch your eyes.

(2.) Watch your ear. Much poison is conveyed through the ear. Let your ear be open to God, and shut to sin.

(3.) Watch your hearts : we watch suspicious persons, ' The heart is deceitful,' Jer. xvii. 9. Watch your heart : 1. When you are about holy things, it will be stealing out to vanity. When I am at prayer, saith St. Hierom, *aut per porticum deambulo, aut de sœnore computo* : either I am walking through galleries, or calling up accounts. 2. Watch your hearts when you are in company. The Basilisk poisons the herbs he breathes on : the breath of the wicked is infectious. Nay, watch your hearts when you are in good company : such as have some good in them, yet may be some grains too light ; they may have much levity of discourse ; and, if no scum boils up, yet too much froth. The devil is subtle, and he can as well creep into the dove, as he did once into the serpent. Satan tempted Christ by an apostle. 3. Watch your hearts in prosperity ; now you are in danger of pride. The higher the water of the Thames riseth, the higher the boat is lifted up ; the higher that men's estates rise, the higher their hearts are lifted up in pride. In prosperity, you are in danger not only to forget God, but to

lift up the heel against him, Deut. xxxii. 15. 'Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.' It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and to carry a full prosperous estate without sinning. *Turpi fregerunt secula luxu divitiæ molles*, Sen. Trag. Samson fell asleep in Dalilah's lap, many have fallen so fast asleep in the lap of prosperity, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell. 4. Watch your hearts after holy duties. When Christ had been praying and fasting, then the devil tempted him, Mat. iv. 23. After our combating with Satan in prayer, we are apt to grow secure, and put our spiritual armour off, and then the devil falls on and wounds us. O if you would get heaven, be always upon your watch-tower, let a spy, keep close sentinel in your souls; who would not watch when it is for a kingdom?

9. If you would arrive at the heavenly kingdom get these three graces, which will undoubtedly bring you thither.

(1.) Divine knowledge: there is no going to heaven blindfold. In the creation, light was the first thing that was made; so it is in the new creation: knowledge is the pillar of fire that goes before us, and lights us into the heavenly kingdom. It is light must bring us to the 'Inheritance in light,' Col. i. 12.

(2.) Faith: faith ends in salvation, 1 Pet. i. 9. 'Receiving the end of your faith, salvation.' He who believes, is as sure to go to heaven as if he were in heaven already, Acts xvi. 31. Faith toucheth Christ; and can he miss of heaven, who toucheth Christ? Faith unites to Christ? and, shall not the members be where the head is? All have not the same degree of faith; we must distinguish between the direct act of faith, and the reflex act, assiance and assurance; yet the least seed and spark of faith gives an undoubted title to the heavenly kingdom. I am justified because I believe, not because I know I believe.

(3.) Love to God: heaven is prepared for those that love God, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Love is the soul of obedience, the touchstone of sincerity, by our loving God, we may know he loves us, 1 John iv. 19. And those whom God loves, he will lay in his bosom. Ambrose, in his funeral-oration for Theodosius, brings in the angels hovering about his departing soul, and being ready to carry it to heaven, asked him, "what that grace was he had most practised upon earth?" Theodosius replied, *Dilexi, Dilexi*, "I have loved, I have loved;" and straitway he was, by a convoy of angels, translated to glory. Love is a sacred fire kindled in the breast; in the flames of this fire, the devout soul ascends to heaven.

10. If we would obtain this heavenly kingdom, let us labour for sincerity, Prov. xxviii. 18. 'Whosoever walketh uprightly, shall be saved.' The sincere Christian may fall short of some degrees of grace, but he never falls short of the kingdom: God will pass by many failings, where the heart is right, Num. xxiii.



21. True gold, though it be light, hath grains of allowance, Pf. li. 6. 'Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' Sincerity is the fauce which seasons all our actions, and makes them favourable; it is the ingredient into every grace; it is called 'faith unfeigned,' 2 Tim. i. 5. and 'love in sincerity,' Eph. v. 24. Coin will not go current that wants the king's stamp; grace is not current, if it be not stamped with sincerity. Glorious duties soured with hypocrisy are rejected, when great infirmities sweetened with sincerity are accepted. If any thing in the world bring us to heaven, it is sincerity. Sincerity signifies plainness of heart, Pf. xxxii. 2. 'In whose spirit there is no guile.' The plainer the diamond is, the richer.

(1.) Sincerity is when we serve God with our heart; we do not only worship him, but love him. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart: this is God's delight, a sacrifice flaming upon the altar of the heart. A sincere Christian, though he hath a double principle in him, flesh and spirit, yet he hath not a double heart, his heart is for God,

(2.) Sincerity is when we aim purely at God in all we do. The glory of God is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. A sincere Christian, though he comes short in duty, yet he takes a right aim. As the herb *Heliotropium* turns about according to the motion of the sun; so a godly man's actions do all move towards the glory of God.

11. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us keep up fervency in duty. What is a dead form without the power? Rev. iii. 16. 'Because thou art luke-warm, neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Fervency puts life into duty, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving God.' Gr. *Zenotes*, 'boiling over.' Christ prayed 'yet more earnestly,' Luke xxii. 44. When the fire on the golden censer was ready to go out, Aaron was to put more coals to the incense, praying with devotion, is putting more coals to the incense. It is not formality, but fervency, will bring us to heaven; the formalist is like Ephraim, a cake not turned, hot on one side, and dough on the other. In the external part of God's worship, he seems to be hot; but as for the spiritual part of God's worship, he is cold. Oh, if you would have the kingdom of heaven, keep up heat and fervour in duty, Elijah was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot: if you would go to heaven, you must be carried thither in the fiery chariot of zeal; it is violence that takes the kingdom of heaven.

12. If we would arrive at the heavenly kingdom, let us cherish the motions of God's Spirit in our hearts. The mariner may spread his sails, but the ship cannot get to the haven without a gale of wind; so we may spread the sails of our endeavour, but we cannot get to the haven of glory, without the

north and south wind of God's Spirit blow : how nearly therefore doth it concern us to make much of the motions of God's Spirit, motions to prayer, motions to repentance ? 2 Sam. v. 24. ' When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee ; ' So, when we hear, as it were a voice within us, a secret inspiration stirring us up to good duties, we should then bestir ourselves ; while the Spirit works in us, we should work with the Spirit. Many men have God's Spirit striving with them, he puts good motions in their hearts and holy purposes ; but they, neglecting to prosecute these good motions, the Spirit is thereby grieved ; and, being grieved, withdraws its assistance ; and, that assistance being gone, there is no getting to heaven. O make much of the motions of the Spirit, it is as much as your salvation is worth. The Spirit of God is compared to fire, Acts ii. 2. if we are careful to blow this spark, we may have fire to inflame our affections, and to light our feet into the way of peace. If we quench the Spirit by our neglecting and resisting its motions, we cut ourselves off from salvation. The Spirit of God hath a drawing power, Cant. i. 4. The blessed Spirit draws by attraction, as the loadstone the iron. In the preaching of the word, the Spirit draws the heart up to heaven in holy longings and ejaculations. Now when the Spirit is about thus to draw us, let us take heed of drawing back, lest it be to perdition, Heb. x. We should do as Noah, when the dove came flying to the ark ; he put forth his hand, and took it into the ark ; so when this sweet dove of God's Spirit comes flying to our hearts, and brings a gracious impulse as an olive-branch of peace in its mouth, O take this dove into the ark, entertain the Spirit in your hearts, and it will bring you to heaven.

*Qu. But how shall we know the motions of the Spirit from a delusion ?*

*Ans.* The motions of the Spirit are always agreeable to the word. If the word be for holiness, so is the Spirit ; the Spirit persuades to nothing, but what the word directs : which way the tide of the word runs, that way the wind of the Spirit blows.

13. We obtain the kingdom of heaven by uniform and cheerful obedience ; obedience is the road through which we travail to heaven. Many say they love God, but refuse to obey him ; doth he love the prince's person who flights his commands ?

(1.) Obedience must be uniform, Pl. cxix. 6. ' Then shall I not be ashamed, ' [Heb.] " I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments." As the sun goes through all the signs of the Zodiac, so must we go through all the duties of religion : if a man be to go an hundred miles, and he goes ninety-nine miles, and there stops, he comes short of the place

he is to travel to ; if, with Herod, we do many things that God commands, yet, if we lie in the total neglect of any duty, we come short of the kingdom of heaven ; for instance, if a man seem to make conscience of duties of the first table, and not the duties of the second ; if he seem to be religious, but is not just, he is a transgressor, and is in danger to lose heaven ; a good heart is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws, so he moves that way which the word draws.

(2.) Obedience must be cheerful : ‘ I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.’ Ps. xl. 8. That is the sweetest obedience which is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb freely. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness, Zech. v. 9. ‘ There came out two women, and the wind was in their wings.’ Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness : an emblem of the swiftness and cheerfulness which should be in obedience. We go to heaven in the way of obedience.

14. If we would obtain this kingdom, be much in the communion of saints ; one coal of juniper will warm and inflame another ; when the heart is dead and frozen, the communion of saints will help to warm it, Mal. iii. 16. ‘ They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.’ Christians should never meet (saith Mr. Bolton) but speak of their meeting together in heaven. One Christian may be very helpful by prayer and conference to another, and give him a lift toward heaven. Old Latimer was much strengthened and comforted by hearing Mr. Bilny’s confession of faith. We read that when Moses’ hands were heavy, and he was ready to let them fall, Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, Exod. xvii. 12. A Christian who is ready to faint under temptation, and lets down the hands of his faith, by conversing with other Christians, he is strengthened, and his hands are held up. A great benefit of holy conference is counsel and advice ; if a man (saith Chrysostom) who hath but one head to advise him, could make that head a hundred heads to advise him, he would be very wise ; a single Christian hath this benefit by the communion of saints, they are as so many heads to advise him what to do in such a case or exigency ; by Christian conference the saints can say, ‘ Did not our hearts burn within us ?’ Communion of saints we have in our creed, but it is too little in our practice ; men usually travel fastest in company ; we travel fastest to heaven in the communion of saints.

15. If we would attain to this kingdom of heaven, let us be willing to come up to Christ’s terms. Many will be cheapening, and bid something for the kingdom of heaven, they will avoid gross sin, and will come to church, and say their prayers ; and yet all this while they are not willing to come up to God’s

price, that is they will not resist the idol of self-righteousness, flying only to Christ as the horns of the altar; they will not sacrifice their bosom-sin; they will not give God spirit-worship, serving him with zeal and intenseness of soul, John iv. 24. They will not forgive their enemies; they will not part with their carnal profits for Christ; they would have the kingdom of heaven, but they will not come up to the price: if you would have this kingdom, do not article and indent with Christ, but accept of his terms; say, Lord, I am willing to have the kingdom of heaven whatever it cost me: I am willing to pluck out my right eye, to part with all for the kingdom; here is a blank paper I put into thy hand, Lord, write thy own articles, I will subscribe to them.

16. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us attend to the holy ordinances; thus God brings souls to heaven, Acts xxvii. 31. 'Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Some people would leap out of the ship of ordinances, and then God knows whither they leap; but except ye abide in the ship of ordinances, ye cannot be saved. Especially, if you would get to heaven, attend to the word preached: it was by the ear, by our first parents listening to the serpent, that we lost paradise; and it is by the ear, by the hearing of the word, that we get to heaven, Isa. lv. 3. 'Hear, and your souls shall live.' God, sometimes in the preaching of the word, drops in that holy oil into the ear, which softens and sanctifies the heart; the word preached is called the 'ministry of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. because the Spirit of God makes use of this engine to convert souls. If the word preached doth not work upon men, nothing will; not judgment, nor miracles; no, nor though one should arise from the dead; Luke xvi. 31. If a glorified saint should come out of heaven, and assume a body, and tell you of all the glory of heaven, and the joys of the blessed, and persuade you to believe; if the preaching of the word will not bring you to heaven, neither would his rhetoric do it who rose from the dead. In heaven there will be no need of ordinances, but there is while we live here; the lamp needs oil, but the stars need none. While the saints have their lamp of grace burning here, they need the oil of ordinances to be continually dropping upon them; but there will be no need of this oil when they are stars in heaven, If you intend to get to heaven, be swift to hear; for faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 14, 17. Peter laid down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. If you would have heaven's door opened to you, wait at the posts of wisdom's door.

17. If you would arrive at heaven, have this kingdom ever in your eye: our blessed Lord looked at the joy that was set before him; and Moses had an 'eye to the recompence of re-

ward,' Heb. xi. 26. Let the kingdom be much in our thoughts; meditation is the means to help us to heaven.

Qu. *How doth it help?*

Ans. 1. As it is a mean to prevent sin. No sword like this to cut asunder the sinews of temptation; it is almost impossible to sin presumptuously with the lively thoughts and hopes of heaven: It was when Moses was out of sight that Israel set up a calf, and worshipped it; so it is when the kingdom of heaven is out of sight, I mean, out of men's thoughts, that they set up their lusts, and idolize them. The meditation of heaven banisheth sin; he who thinks of the weight of glory, throws away the weight of sin.

2. To meditate on the kingdom of heaven, would excite and quicken obedience. We should think we could never pray enough, never love God enough, who hath prepared such a kingdom for us. *Immensum gloria calcar habet.* St. Paul had heaven in his eye, he was once caught up thither; and how active was he for God? 1 Cor. xv. 10. This would oil the wheels of obedience.

3. It would make us strive after holiness, because none but such are admitted into this kingdom, only the 'pure in heart shall see God,' Mat. v. 8. Holiness is the language of heaven; it is the only coin will pass current in heaven: this considered, would make us 'cleave ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Thus you see how the meditation of heaven would be a means to bring us thither.

18. The last means for obtaining the heavenly kingdom is perseverance in holiness, Rev. ii. 10. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life.' In Christians, *non initia sed fines laudantur*, Hierom.

1. Is there such a thing as persevering?

2. How doth a Christian come to persevere?

3. What are the encouragements?

4. What helps?

1. Is there such a thing as persevering till we come to heaven? The Arminians deny it; and truly that any one holds out to the kingdom, is a wonder, if you consider,

1. What a world of corruption is mingled with grace: grace is apt to be stifled, as the coal to be choaked with its own ashes: grace is oft like a spark in the sea, it is a wonder it is not quenched: it is a wonder sin doth not do to grace, as sometimes the nurse to the child, overlay it, that it die; so that this infant of grace is smothered.

2. The implacable malice of Satan; he envies that we should have a kingdom, when he himself is cast out; it cuts him to

the heart to see a piece of dust and clay be made a bright star in glory, and he himself an angel of darkness; he will *Acheronta movere*, move all the powers of hell to hinder us from the kingdom: he spits his venom, shoots his fiery darts, raiseth a storm of persecution, yea, and prevails against some, Rev. xii. 4. 'There appeared a great red dragon, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.' By the red dragon is meant the heathenish empire; now when his tail cast so many to the earth, it is a wonder that any of the stars keep fixed in their orb.

3. The blandishments of riches: the young man in the gospel went very far, 'thou art not far from the kingdom of God;' but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom, Luke xviii. 23. Jonathan pursued the battle till he came at the honey-comb, and then he stood still, 1 Sam. xiv. 27. Many are forward for heaven, till they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come at the honey-comb, then they stand still, and go no further. *Funus pecunie funus animæ*. Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet have been cast away upon the golden sands: what a wonder therefore that any doth hold on till he come to the kingdom!

4. A wonder any holds out in grace, and doth not tire in his march to heaven, if you consider the difficulty of a Christian's work: he hath no time to lie fallow, he is either watching or fighting; nay, a Christian is to do those duties which to the eye of sense and reason seem inconsistent: while a Christian doth one duty, he seems to cross another, *e. g.* He must come with holy boldness to God in prayer, yet must serve him with fear; he must mourn for sin; yet rejoice; he must be contented, yet covet: 1 Cor. xii. 32. condemn men's impieties, yet reverence their authority: what difficult work is this? A wonder any saint arrives at the heavenly kingdom. To this I might add, the evil examples abroad, which are so attractive, we may say, the devils are come among us in the likeness of men. What a wonder is it that any soul perseveres till he comes to the kingdom of heaven? But as great a wonder as it is, there is such a thing as perseverance. A saint's perseverance is built upon two immutable pillars.

(1.) God's eternal love: we are inconstant in our love to God; but he is not so in his love to us, Jer. xxxi. 9. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love;' with a love of eternity, God's love to the elect is not like a king's love to his favourite, when it is at the highest spring-tide, it soonest ebbs; but God's love is eternized: God may desert, not disinherit; he may change his love into a frown, not into hatred; he may alter his

providence, not his decree: when once the sun-shine of God's electing love is risen upon the soul, it never sets finally.

(2.) A saint's perseverance is built upon the covenant of grace; it is a firm, impregnable covenant: this you have in the words of the sweet singer of Israel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.' It is a sweet covenant, that God will be our God; the marrow and quintessence of all blessing: and it is a sure covenant, that he will put his fear in our heart, and we shall never depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. This covenant is inviolable, it cannot be broken; indeed sin may break the peace of the covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the covenant.

(3.) The third pillar perseverance is built upon, is the mystical union: believers are incorporated into Christ; they are knit to him as members to the head, by the nerve and ligament of faith, that they cannot be broken off, Eph. v. 23. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical body. John xix. 36. 'A bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled, so it is impossible when Christ and believers are once united, ever by the power of death or hell to be separated: how can Christ lose any member of his body and be perfect? You see upon what strong pillars the saints' perseverance is built.

2. Qu. *How doth a Christian hold on till he comes to the kingdom? How doth he persevere?*

Ans. 1. *Auxilio Spiritus*: God carries on a Christian to perseverance by the energy and vigorous working of his Spirit. The Spirit maintains the essence and seed of grace, it doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy flame. *Spiritus est vicarius Christi*, Tertul. It is Christ's deputy and proxy; it is every day at work in a believer's heart, exerting grace into exercise, and ripening it into perseverance: the Spirit doth carve and polish the vessels of mercy, and make them fit for glory.

2. Christ causeth perseverance, and carries on a saint till he come to the heavenly kingdom, *vi orationis*, by his intercession; Christ is an advocate as well as a surety; he prays that the saints may arrive safe at the kingdom. Heb. vii. 25. 'Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, (*i. e.* perfectly), seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' That prayer he made for Peter on earth, he prays now in heaven for the saints, 'that their faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32. 'that they may be with him where he is,' John xvii. 24. And sure, if he pray that they may be with him in his kingdom, they cannot perish by the way: Christ's prayer is efficacious. If the saints' prayers have so much force and prevalency in them; Jacob had power with God, and as a prince prevailed, Hos.

xii. 4. By prayer Elijah unlocked heaven: if the prayers of the faints have so much power with God, then, what hath Christ's prayer? How can the children of such prayers miscarry? How can they fall short of the kingdom, who have him praying for them, who is not only a Priest, but a Son? and besides, what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God. Thus you see how a Christian comes to persevere till he comes to the kingdom.

*Obj. But methinks I hear some Christians say, if only perseverance obtains the kingdom, they fear they shall not come thither; they fear they shall faint by the way, and the weak legs of their grace will never carry them to the kingdom of heaven?*

*Ans.* Wert thou indeed to stand in thy own strength, thou mightest fall away: that branch withers and dies that hath no root to grow upon. Thou growest upon the root Christ, who will be daily sending forth vital influence to strengthen thee; thou art imbecil and weak in grace, yet fear not falling short of heaven: For,

1. God hath made a promise to weak believers, what is a bruised reed, but an emblem of a weak faith? yet it hath a promise made to it, Mat. xii. 20. 'A bruised reed he will not break.' God hath promised to supply the weak Christian with so much grace as he shall need, till he comes to heaven. Beside the two-pence which the good Samaritan left to pay for the cure of the poor wounded man, he passed his word for all that he should need beside, Luke x. 35. So, Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more, that he will give as much grace as a saint shall need till he comes to heaven, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 'The Lord will give grace and glory;' that is, a fresh supply of grace, till he be perfected in glory.

2. God hath more care of his weak faints, who fear they shall never hold out till they come to the kingdom. Doth not the mother tend the weak child most? Isa. xl. 11. 'He will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.' If thou thinkest that thou art so weak that thou shalt never hold out till thou comest to heaven, thou shalt be carried in the arms of the Almighty; he gathers the lambs in his arms; Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, marcheth before his people, and his power is in their re-reward, so that none of them faint or die in their march to heaven.

*Qu. 3. What are the encouragements to make Christians hold on till they come to the kingdom of heaven?*

*Ans.* 1. It is great credit to a Christian, not only to hold forth the truth, but to hold fast the truth till he comes to heaven; when grace doth flourish into perseverance, and with the



church of Thyatira, our last works are more than our first, Rev. ii. 19. this is *insigne honoris*, a star of honour. It is matter of renown to see grey hairs grow with golden virtues: the excellency of a thing lies in the finishing of it. What is the excellency of a building, not when the first stone is laid, but when it is finished; so the beauty and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished his faith, having done his work, is landed safe in heaven.

2. You that have made a progress in religion, have not many miles to go before you come at the kingdom of heaven, Rom. xiii. 11. 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' You who have hoary hairs, your green tree is turned into an almond tree; you are nearer to heaven, it is but going a little further and you will set your feet within heaven's gates; oh therefore now be encouraged to hold out, your salvation is nearer than when you first began to believe. Our diligence should be greater when our salvation is nearer. When a man is almost at the end of the race, will he now tire and faint? Will he not put forth all his strength, and strain every limb, that he may lay hold upon the prize? Our salvation is now nearer; the kingdom is as it were within sight; how should we now put forth all our strength, that we may lay hold upon the garland of glory? Doctor Taylor, when he was going to his martyrdom, "I have (saith he) but two files to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house." Though the way to heaven be up-hill, you must climb the steep rock of mortification; and though there be thorns in the way, *viz.* sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, you are within a few days march of the kingdom; and will not you persevere? Christian, pluck up thy courage, fight the good fight of faith, pursue holiness; it is but a while and you shall put off your armour, and end all your weary marches, and receive a victorious crown; your salvation is nearer, you are within a little of the kingdom, therefore now persevere, you are ready to commence and take your degree of glory.

3. The blessed promise annexed to perseverance; the promise is a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. Death is a worm that feeds in the crowns of princes, but behold here a living crown, and a never fading-crown, 1 Pet. v. 4. And Rev. ii. 28. He that overcometh, and keepeth my words to the end, I will give him *gloriam matutinam*, the morning-star: the morning-star is brighter than the rest. This morning-star is meant of Christ; as if Christ had said, I will give to him that perseveres some of my beauty; I will put some of my illustrious rays upon him; he shall have the next degree of glory to me, as the morning star is next the sun: will not this animate and make us hold out?

We shall have a kingdom, and that which is better than the kingdom, a bright morning-star.

Qu. (4.) *What are the means conducing to perseverance, or, what shall we do that we may hold out to the kingdom?*

Ans. 1. Take up religion upon good grounds, not in a fit or humour, or out of worldly design; but be deliberate, weigh things well in the balance, Luke xiv. 28. ‘Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?’ Think with yourself what religion must cost you, it must cost you the parting with your sins: and what it may cost you, it may cost you the parting with your lives: consider if a kingdom will not countervail your sufferings. Weigh things well, and then make your choice, Ps. cxix. 30. ‘I have chosen the way of thy truth.’ Why do many apostatize and fall away, but because they did never sit down and count the cost.

2. If we would hold out to the kingdom, let us cherish the grace of faith, 1 Cor. i. 24. ‘By faith ye stand.’ Faith, like Hercules’ club, it beats down all opposition before it; it is a conquering grace.

Qu. *How comes faith to be so strong?*

Ans. Faith fetcheth Christ’s strength into the soul, Phil. iv.

13. A captain may give his soldier armour, but not strength: faith partakes of Christ’s strength, and faith gets strength from the promise; as the child by sucking the breast gets strength, so doth faith by sucking the breast of the promise; hence faith is such a wonder-working grace, and enables a Christian to persevere.

3. If you would hold out to the kingdom, set before your eyes the examples of those noble heroic saints, who have persevered to the kingdom: *vivitur exemplis*, examples have more influence on us than precepts, Job xxiii. 11, 12. ‘My foot hath held his steps.’ Though the way of religion hath flints and thorns in it, yet my foot hath held his steps; I have not fainted in the way, nor turned out of the way. Daniel held on his religion, and would not intermit prayer, though he knew the writing was signed against him, and a prayer might cost him his life, Dan. vi. 10. The blessed martyrs persevered to the kingdom through sufferings. Saunders that holy man, said, ‘Welcome the cross of Christ; my Saviour began to me in a bitter cup, and shall I not pledge him?’ Another martyr, kissing the stake, said, ‘I shall not lose my life, but change it for a better; instead of coals I shall have pearls.’ What a spirit of gallantry was in these saints! Let us learn constancy from their courage. A soldier, seeing his general fight valiantly, is animated by his example, and hath new spirits put into him.

4. Let us add fervent prayer to God, that he would enable us to hold out to the heavenly kingdom, Ps. cxix. 117. ‘Hold

thou me up, and I shall be safe.' Let us not presume on our own strength. When Peter cried to Christ on the water, 'Lord save me,' then Christ took him by the hand, Mat. xiv. 30. But when he grew confident of his own strength, then Christ let him fall. O pray to God for auxiliary grace. The child is safe when held in the nurse's arms : so are we in Christ's arms. Let us pray that God will put his fear in our hearts, that we do not depart from him ; and that prayer of Cyprian, *Domine, quod cœpisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accadat*, Lord, perfect that which thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.

3. *Branch.* Let us press forward with the greatest diligence to this kingdom. And here let me lay down some powerful persuasives, or divine arguments, to make you put to all your strength for the obtaining this blessed kingdom.

1. This is the great errand for which God hath sent us into the world, to prepare for this heavenly kingdom, Matth. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' First in time before all things ; and first in affections, above all things. Great care is taken for the achieving worldly things, Matt. vi. 25. To see people labouring for the earth, as ants about a molehill, would make one think this were the only errand they came about : but alas ! What is all this to the kingdom of heaven ? I have read of a devout pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, who passing through several cities, where he saw many stately edifices, ware and monuments, he would say, " I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem : " so when we enjoy worldly things, peace and plenty, and have our presses burst out with new wine, we should say to ourselves, this is not the kingdom we are to look after, this is not heaven : it is wisdom to remember our errand. It will be but sad upon a death-bed for a man to think he was busying himself only about trifles, playing with a feather, and neglecting the main thing he came into the world about.

2. The seeking after the heavenly kingdom will be judged most prudent by all men at last. Those who are most regardless of their souls now, will, before they die, wish they had minded eternity more. When conscience is awakened, and men begin to come to themselves, now, what would they give for the kingdom of heaven ? How happy were it, if men were of the same mind now, as they will be at death ? Death will alter men's opinions ; then those who did most slight and disparage the ways of religion, will wish their time and thoughts had been taken up about the excellent glory. At death men's eyes will be opened, and they will see their folly when it is too late. If all men, even the worst, will wish at last that they had minded the kingdom of heaven, why should not we do that now, which all will wish they had done when they come to die.

3. This kingdom of heaven deserves our utmost pains and diligence ; it is glorious, beyond hyperbole. Suppose earthly kingdoms more magnificent than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire, yet they are not comparable to the heavenly kingdom. If the pavement of it be bespangled with so many bright shining lights, glorious stars, what is the kingdom itself ? 1 John iii. 2. ‘ It doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ This kingdom exceeds our faith. How sublime and wonderful is that place where the blessed Deity shines forth in his immense glory, infinitely beyond the comprehension of angels ?

(1.) The kingdom of heaven is a place of honour ; there are the glorious triumphs and sparkling crowns. In other kingdoms, there is but one king, but in heaven all are kings, Rev. i. 6. Every saint glorified partakes of the same glory as Christ doth, John xvii. 22. ‘ The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.’

(2.) This kingdom is a place of joy, Matth. xxv. 21. ‘ Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ To have a continual aspect of love from God’s face, to be crowned with immortality, to be as the angels of God, to drink of the rivers of pleasure for ever, this will cause raptures of joy. Sure it deserves our utmost pains in pursuing and securing this kingdom. Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing the senate and people had fled from it, said, “ that they will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for ? ” If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for ? It was the speech of the spies to their brethren, Judg. xviii. 9. ‘ We have seen the land, and behold it is very good ; and are ye still ? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.’ We have had a lively description of the glory of heaven, we find the kingdom is very good ; why then do we sit still ? Why do we not *operam novare*, put forth our utmost zeal and industry for this kingdom ? The diligence of others in seeking after earthly kingdoms, shames our coldness and indifferency in pursuing after the kingdom of heaven.

4. The time we have to make sure of the heavenly kingdom is very short and uncertain ; take heed it doth not slip away before you have prepared for the kingdom. Time passeth on apace, *ctio pede preterita vita* ; it will not be long ‘ before the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl broken,’ Eccl. xii. The skin wherein the brains are enclosed as in a bowl, this golden bowl will soon be broken. Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out : the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity. We know not whether we shall live to another sabbath : before we hear another sermon-bell go, our passing bell may go. Our life

runs as a swift stream into the ocean of eternity. Brethren, if our time be so minute and transient, if the taper of life be so soon wasted, or perhaps blown out by violent death, how should we put to all our strength, and call in help from heaven, that we may obtain the kingdom of glory? If time be so short, why do we waste it about things of less moment, and neglect the 'one thing needful,' which is the kingdom of heaven? A man that hath a great work to be done, and but one day for the doing of it, hath need to work hard: we have a great work to do, we are striving for a kingdom, and, alas! we are not certain of one day to work in; therefore what need have we to bestir ourselves, and what we do for heaven, to do it with all our might?

5. To excite our diligence, let us consider how inexcusable we shall be, if we miss of the kingdom of heaven. Who have had such helps for heaven as we have had? Indians who have mines of gold, have not such advantages for glory as we: they have the light of the sun, moon, and stars, and the light of reason, but this is not enough to light them to heaven: but we have had the light of the gospel shining in our horizon; we have been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; we have had the word in season and out of season. The ordinances are the pipes of the sanctuary, which empty the golden oil of grace into the soul; they are *scala paradisi*, the ladder by which we ascend to the kingdom of heaven, Deut. iv. 7. 'What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?' We have had heaven and hell set before us, we have had counsels of friends, warnings, examples, the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost; how should all these spurs quicken us in our pace to heaven? Should not that ship sail apace to the haven, which hath wind and tide to carry it? The tide of ordinances, and the wind of the Spirit. Surely if we, through negligence, miss of the kingdom of heaven, we shall have nothing to say for ourselves; we shall be as far from excuse as from happiness.

6. You cannot do too much for the kingdom of heaven: you cannot pray too much, sanctify the sabbath too much, love God too much; you cannot overdo. In secular things a man may labour too hard, he may kill himself with working; but there is no fear of working too hard for heaven. *In virtute non est verendum ne quid nimium sit*, Seneca. The world is apt to censure the godly, as if they were too zealous, and did overstrain themselves in religion. Indeed a man may follow the world too much, he may make too much haste to be rich: the ferry-man may take in too many passengers into his boat, to the sinking of his boat; so a man may heap up so much gold and silver, as to sink himself in perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9. but one cannot be too earnest and zealous for the kingdom of heaven; there is no fear

of excess here, when we do all we can for heaven, we come short of the golden rule set us, and of Christ's golden pattern ; when our faith is highest, like the sun in the meridian, yet still there is something lacking in our faith, 1 Thess: iii. 1. so that all our labour for the kingdom is little enough. When a Christian hath done his best, yet still he hath sins, and wants to bewail.

7. By this you may judge of the state of your souls, whether you have grace or not, by your earnest pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. Grace infuseth a spirit of activity into a person ; grace doth not lie dormant in the soul ; it is not a sleepy habit, but it makes a Christian like a seraphim, swift and winged in his heavenly motions : grace is like fire, it makes one burn in love to God ; and the more he loves him, the more he presseth forward to heaven, where he may fully enjoy him. Hope is an active grace, it is called ' a lively hope,' 1 Pet. i. 3. Hope is like the spring in the watch, it sets all the wheels of the soul a running ; hope of a crop makes the husbandman sow his seed ; hope of victory makes the soldier fight ; and a true hope of glory makes a Christian vigorously pursue glory. Here is a spiritual touch-stone to try our grace by : if we have the anointing of the Spirit, it will oil the wheels of our endeavour, and make us lively in our pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. No sooner had Paul grace infused, but presently, ' Behold, he prays,' Acts ix. 11. The affections are by divines called the " feet of the soul ;" if these feet move not towards heaven, it is because there is no life.

8. Your labour for heaven is not lost : perhaps you may think it is in vain that you have served God : but know that your pains are not lost. The seed is cast into the earth, and it dies, yet at last it brings forth a plentiful crop ; so your labours seem to be fruitless, but at last they bring you to a kingdom. Who would not work hard for one hour, when, for that hour's work, he should be a king as long as he lived ? And let me tell you, the more labour you have put forth for the kingdom of heaven, the more degrees of glory you shall have. As there are degrees of torment in hell, Matth. xxiii. 41. so of glory in heaven. As one star differs from another in glory, so shall one saint, 1 Cor. xv. 41. Though every vessel of mercy shall be full, yet one vessel may hold more than another. Such as have done more work for God, shall have more glory in the heavenly kingdom. Could we hear the saints departed speaking to us from heaven, sure they would speak after this manner : were we to leave heaven a while, and live on the earth again, we would do God a thousand times more service than ever we did : we would pray with more life, act with more zeal ; for now we

fee, the more hath been our labour, the greater is our reward in heaven.

9. While we are labouring for the kingdom, God will help us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' The promise encourageth us, and God's Spirit enableth us. A master gives his servant work to do, but he cannot give him strength to work: but God, as he cuts us out work, so he gives us strength, Ps. lxxxvi. 16. 'Give thy strength unto thy servant.' God not only gives us a crown when we have done running, but gives us legs to run: he gives exciting, assisting grace; *lex jubet gratia juvat*: the Spirit helping us in our work for heaven, makes it easy. If the load-stone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit draws the heart, now it moves towards heaven with facility and alacrity.

10. The more pains we have taken for heaven, the sweeter heaven will be when we come there. As when an husbandman hath been grafting trees, or setting flowers in his garden, it is pleasant to review and look over his labours; so, when in heaven we shall remember our former zeal and earnestness for the kingdom, it will sweeten heaven, and add to the joy of it. For a Christian to think, such a day I spent in examining my heart, such a day I was weeping for sin; when others were at their sport, I was at prayer: and now, have I lost any thing by my devotion? My tears are wiped away, and the wine of paradise cheers my heart; I now enjoy him whom my soul loves; I am possessed of a kingdom; my labour is over, and my joy remains.

11. If you do not take pains for the kingdom of heaven now, there will be nothing to be done for your souls after death: this is the only fit season for working; and if this season be lost, the kingdom is forfeited, Eccles. ix. 10. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.' It was a saying of Charles V. "I have spent my treasure, but that I may recover again; I have lost my health, but that I may have again; but I have lost a great many brave soldiers, but them I can never have again." So other temporal blessings may be lost and recovered again; but if the term of life, wherein you should work for heaven, be once lost, it is past all recovery; you can never have another season again for your souls.

12. There is nothing else but this kingdom of heaven we can make sure of; we cannot make sure of life. *Quis scit an adjiciat hodiernae crastinae vitae tempora dii superi?* Hor. When our breath goes out, we know not whether we shall draw it again? How many are taken away suddenly? We cannot make riches sure, it is uncertain whether we shall get them;

the world is like a lottery, every one is not sure to draw a prize : or, if we get riches, we are not sure to keep them, Prov. xxiii. 5. ‘ Riches make themselves wings and fly.’ Experience seals to the truth of this. Many who have had plentiful estates, yet, by fire, or losses at sea, they have been squeezed as sponges, and all their estates exhausted : but if men should keep their estates a while, yet death strips them of all ; when death’s gun goes off, away flies the estate, 1 Tim. vi. 7. ‘ It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world :’ so that there is no making sure of any thing here below, but we may make sure of the kingdom of heaven, Prov. xi. 18. ‘ To him that worketh righteousness is a sure reward.’ He who hath grace is sure of heaven, for he hath grace begun in him. A believer hath an evidence of heaven, Heb. xi. 1. ‘ Faith is the evidence of things not seen.’ He hath an earnest of glory, 2 Cor. i. 22. ‘ Who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit.’ An earnest is part of the whole sum. He hath a sure hope, Heb. vi. 19. ‘ Which hope we have as an anchor.’ This anchor is cast upon God’s promise, Tit. i. 2. ‘ In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.’ So that here is great encouragement to take pains for heaven, we may make sure of this kingdom.

13. The kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained without labour. *Non est ad astra molis e terris via.* A boat may as well get to land without oars, as we to heaven without labour. We cannot have the world, without labour, and do we think to have heaven ! If a man digs for gravel, much more for gold, Phil. iii. 14. ‘ I press toward the mark.’ Heaven’s-gate is not like that ‘ iron-gate which opened to Peter of its own accord,’ Acts xii. 10. Heaven is not like those ‘ ripe figs which fall into the mouth of the eater,’ Nah. iii. 12. No, there must be taking pains. Two things are requisite for a Christian, a watchful eye and a working hand. We must, like Hannibal, force away to the heavenly kingdom through difficulties. We must win the garland of glory by labour, before we wear it with triumph. God hath enacted this law, ‘ That no man shall eat of the tree of paradise, but in the sweat of his brows :’ how then dare any censure christian diligence ? how dare they say you take more pains for heaven than needs. God saith, ‘ Strive as in an agony,’ fight the good ‘ fight of faith ?’ and they say, you are too strict : but who shall we believe ? An holy God that bids us strive, or a profane atheist that saith we strive too much ?

14. Much of our time being already mispent, we had need work the harder for the kingdom of heaven ; he who hath lost his time at school, and often played truant, had need ply it the harder, that he may gain a stock of learning : he who hath slept and loitered in the beginning of his journey, had need ride the



faster in the evening, lest he fall short of the place he is travelling to. Some here present are in their youth, others in the flower of their age, others have grey hairs, the almond tree blossoms, and perhaps they have been very regardless of their souls or heaven. Time spent unprofitably is not time lived, but time lost : if there be any such here, who have mispent their golden hours, they have not only been slothful, but wasteful servants ; how had you need now to redeem the time, and press forward with might and main to the heavenly kingdom ? 1 Pet. iv. 3. ' The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.' It may suffice us that we have lost so much time already, let us now work the harder : such as have crept as snails, had need now fly as eagles to the paradise of God ; if, in the former part of your life, you have been as willows, barren in goodness, in the latter part be as ' an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits,' Cant. iv. 13. Recompense former remissness with future diligence.

15. How uncomely and sordid a slothful temper of soul is, Zeph. i. 12. ' I will punish the men who are settled on their lees : ' Heb. " Crudled on their lees." Settling on the lees, is an emblem of a dull unactive soul. The snail by reason of its slow motion, was reckoned among the unclean, Lev. xi. 30. ' A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom,' Prov. xix. 24. he is loth to pull it out, though it be to lay hold on a crown, *Non capit porta illa cœlestis torpori languidos*, Brugenl. The devil himself cannot be charged with idleness, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' He walketh about.' An idle soul stands in the world for a cipher, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life ; heaven is no hive for drones ; an idle person is fit for a temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough, then it is in danger of the gun ; when one sits still in sloth, then the devil shootshim with a temptation ; standing water putrifies. Heathens will rise up in judgment against supine Christians ; what pains did they take in the Olympic games ? they ran but for a garland of flowers, or olive ; and do we sit still who run for a kingdom ? how can he expect a reward that never works, or a crown that never fights ? *Inertia animae somnus*. Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam when he was asleep lost his rib ; and when a person is in the deep sleep of sloth, he loseth salvation.

16. Holy activity and industry doth ennoble a Christian. *Labor splendore decoratur*, Cicero. The more excellent any thing is, the more active. The sun is a glorious creature, it is ever in motion, going its circuit : fire is the purest element, and the most active, it is ever sparkling and flaming : the angels are the most noble creatures, they are represented by the cherubims, with wings displayed. The more active for heaven the more illustrious, and the more do we resemble the angels. The phœ-

nix flies with a coronet on its head ; the industrious soul hath his coronet, his labour is his ensign of honour.

17. It is a mercy that there is a possibility of happiness, and that upon our pains taking we may have a kingdom : by our fall in Adam we forfeited heaven : why might not God have dealt with us as with the lapsed angels ? They had no sooner sinned, but they were expelled heaven, never to come thither more ; we may say, as the apostle, Rom. xi. 22. ‘ Behold the goodness, and severity of God.’ To the apostate angels, behold the severity of God, that he should throw them down to hell for ever ; to us, behold the goodness of God ; that he hath put us into a possibility of mercy ; and, if we do but take pains, there is a kingdom stands ready for us : how may this whet and sharpen our industry, that we are in a capacity of salvation ? and, if we do but what we are able, we shall receive an eternal weight of glory.

18. Our labour for the kingdom of heaven is minute and transient, it is not to endure long, our labour expires with our life ; it is but a while and we shall leave off working ; for a little labour an eternal rest. Who would think much to wade through a little water, that were sure to be crowned as soon as they came on shore ; Christians, let this encourage you, you have but a little more pains to take, a few tears more to shed, a few more sabbaths to keep, and behold an eternal recompence of reward ; what are a few tears to a crown ? a few minutes of time to an eternity of glory ?

19. What striving is there for earthly kingdoms, which are corruptible, and subject to change ? with what vigour and alacrity did Hannibal’s soldiers continue their march over the Alps, and craggy rocks, and Cæsar’s soldiers fight with hunger and cold ? Men will break through laws and oaths, they will swim to the crown in blood : will they venture thus for earthly promotions, and shall not we strive more for an heavenly kingdom ? This is ‘ a kingdom which cannot be shaken,’ Heb. xii. 28. a kingdom where there is unparalled beauty, unstained honour, unmixed joy ; a kingdom where there shall be nothing present which we could wish were removed, nor nothing absent which we could wish were enjoyed. Sure if there be any spark of grace, or true generosity in our breasts, we will not suffer ourselves to be out-striven by others ; we will not let them take more pains for earthly honours, than we do for that excellent glory which will crown all our desires.

20. How much pains do some men take to go to hell, and shall not we take more pains to go to heaven ? Jer. ix. 5. ‘ They weary themselves to commit iniquity.’ Sinners hackney themselves out in the devil’s service : what pains do some men take to satisfy their unclean lusts ! they waste their estates,

wear the shameful marks of their sin about them : they will visit the harlot's house, though it stands the next door to hell, Prov. vii. 27. ' Her house is the way to hell.' What pains do others take in persecuting ! Holiness is the white they shoot at. It is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, he undertook more tedious journeys, and went upon greater hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. The devil blows the horn, and men ride post to hell, as if they feared hell would be full ere they would get thither. When Satan had entered into Judas, how active was Judas ! he goes to the high priests, from them to the band of soldiers, and with them back again to the garden, and never left till he had betrayed Christ. How industrious were the idolatrous Jews ! so fiercely were they bent upon their sin, that they would sacrifice their sons and daughters to their idol-gods, Jer. xxxii. 35. Do men take all this pains for hell, and shall not we take pains for the kingdom of heaven ? The wicked have nothing to encourage them in their sins, they have all the threatenings of God as a flaming sword against them. O let it never be said, that the devil's servants are more active than Christ's ; that they serve him better who rewards them only with fire and brimstone, than we do God, who rewards us with a kingdom.

21. The labour we take for heaven, is a labour full of pleasure, Prov. iii. 17. A man sweats at his recreation, tires himself with hunting, but there is a delight he takes in it, which sweetens it, Rom. vii. 22. ' I delight in the law of God in the inner man,' Gr. I take pleasure. Not only is the kingdom of heaven delightful, but the way thither ; what delight hath a gracious soul in prayer ? Isa. lvi. 7. ' I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.' While a Christian weeps, there is joy drops with tears ; while he is musing on God, he hath such illapses of the Spirit, and, as it were, such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in heaven, Ps. lxiii. 5, 6. ' My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed,' &c. A Christian's work for heaven is like a bridegroom's work on the morning of the marriage-day, he puts on his vesture and wedding-robcs, in which he shall be married to his bride : so, in all the duties of religion, we are putting on those wedding-robcs, in which we shall be married to Christ in glory. O what solace and inward peace is there in close walking with God ! Isa. xxxii. 17. ' The work of righteousness shall be peace.' Serving of God is like gathering of spices or flowers, wherein there is some labour, but the labour is recompensed with delight. Working for heaven is like digging in a gold mine ; the digging is labour, but getting the gold is pleasure : O then let us bestir ourselves for the king-

dom of heaven ; it is a labour full of pleasure ! A Christian would not part with his joy for the most delicious music ; he would not exchange his anchor of hope for a crown of gold. Well might David say, ‘ In keeping thy precepts there is great reward.’ Ps. xix. 11. not only after keeping thy precepts, but in keeping them : a Christian hath both the spring-flowers ; and the crop ; inward delight in serving God, there is the spring-flowers ; and the kingdom of glory at last, there is the full crop.

22. How industrious have the saints in former ages been ! They thought they could never do enough for heaven : they could never serve God enough, love him enough. *Minus te amavi, Domine*, Aug. Lord, I have loved thee too little. What pains did St. Paul take for the heavenly kingdom ? Phil. iii. 13. ‘ Reaching forth unto those things which are before.’ The Greek word to reach forth, signifies to stretch out the neck : a metaphor from racers, who strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. Anna the prophetess, Luke ii. 37. ‘ departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.’ Basil the great, by much labour and watching, exhausted his bodily strength. ‘ Let racks, pullies, and all torments come upon me (said Ignatius) so I may win Christ.’ The industry and courage of former saints, who are now crowned with glory, should provoke our diligence, that so at last we may sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven.

23. The more pains we take for heaven, the more welcome will death be to us : what is it makes men so loth to die ? They are like a tenant that will not go out of the house till the sergeant pull him out ; they love not to hear of death ; why so ? Because their conscience accuseth them that they have taken little or no pains for heaven ; they have been sleeping when they should have been working, and now they are afraid lest death should carry them prisoners to hell : whereas he who hath spent his time in serving of God, he can look death in the face with comfort : he was wholly taken up about heaven, and now he shall be taken up to heaven : he traded before in heaven, and now he shall go to live there, Phil. i. 22. *Cupio dissolvi*, ‘ I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.’ Paul had wholly laid himself out for God, 1 Cor. xv. 10. and now he knew there was a crown laid up for him, and he longed to take possession. Thus I have given you twenty-three persuasives or arguments to exert and put forth your utmost diligence, to the obtaining the kingdom of heaven. O that these arguments were written in all your hearts, as with the point of a diamond ! And, because delays in these cases are dangerous, let me desire you to set upon this work for heaven presently, Ps.

cxix. 60. 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' Many people are convinced of the necessity of looking after the kingdom of glory, but they say as those, Hag. i. 2. 'The time is not yet come.' They adjourn and put off till their time is slipped away, and so they lose the kingdom of heaven; beware of this falacy: delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man, 1 Sam. xxi. 8. 'The king's business requires haste;' so the business of salvation requires haste: do not put off an hour longer, *volat ambiguis mobilis aliis hora*. What assurance have you that you shall live another day? Have you any lease of life granted? why then do you not presently arise out of the bed of sloth, and put forth all your strength and spirits that you may be possessed of the kingdom of glory; should not things of the highest importance be done first? Settling a man's estate, and clearing the title to his land, is not delayed, but done in the first place; what is there of such grand importance as this, the saving of your souls, and the gaining of a kingdom? Therefore to-day hear God's voice, now mind eternity, now get your title to heaven cleared before the decree of death bring forth; what imprudence is it to lay the heaviest load upon the weakest horse? So, to lay the heavy load of repentance on thyself, when thou art enfeebled by sickness, the hands shake, the lips quiver, the heart faints. O be wise in time, now prepare for the kingdom. He who never begins his voyage to heaven but in the storm of death, it is a thousand to one if he doth not suffer an eternal shipwreck.

*Use VI. Of exhortation.*

1. *Branch.* If there be such a glorious kingdom a-coming, then you who have any good hope through grace, you that are the heirs of this kingdom, let me exhort you to fix things:

1. Often take a prospect of this heavenly kingdom: climb up the celestial mount: take a turn, as it were in heaven every day, by holy meditation, Ps. xlviii. 12, 13. 'Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.' see what a glorious kingdom heaven is; go tell the towers, view the palaces of the heavenly Jerusalem: Christian, shew thy heart the gates of pearl, the beds of spices, the clutters of grapes which grow in the paradise of God; Say, O my soul, all this glory is thine, it is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee this kingdom. The thoughts of heaven are very delightful and ravishing; can men of the world so delight in viewing their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of promise take more delight in contemplating the celestial kingdom? The serious meditation of the kingdom of would glory work these three effects.

(1.) It would put a damp and slur upon all worldly glo-

ry : those who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but small in their eye ; could we look through the perspective glass of faith, and take a view of heaven's glory, how small and minute would all other things appear ? Moses sighted the honours of Pharaoh's court, having an eye to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26. St. Paul, who had a vision of glory, and St. John, who was carried away in the spirit, and saw the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven, having the glory of God in it, Rev. xxi. 11. how did the world after appear in an eclipse to them ?

(2.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would much promote holiness in us : ' heaven is an holy place,' 1 Pet. i. 4. ' An inheritance undefiled ;' it is described by transparent glass, to denote its purity, Rev. xxi. 21. The contemplating heaven would put us upon the study of holiness, because none but such are admitted into that kingdom : heaven is not like Noah's ark, into which came clean beasts and unclean ; only ' the pure in heart shall see God,' Matth. v. 8.

(3.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would be a spur to diligence, *Immensum gloria calcar habet*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. ' Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' When the mariner sees the haven, he plies it harder with his oars ; when we have a sight and prospect of glory, it would make us be much in prayer, alms, watching ; it would add wings to duty, and make the lamp of our devotion burn brighter.

2. If you have hopes of this kingdom, be content though you have but a little of the world : contentment is a rare thing, it is a jewel that but few Christians wear ; but if you have a grounded hope of heaven, it may work your heart to contentation. What though you have but little in possession ? you have a kingdom in reversion. Were you to take an estimate of a man's estate, how would you value it ? by what he hath in his house, or by his land ? Perhaps he hath little money or jewels in his house, but he is a landed man, there lies his estate. A believer hath but little oil in the cruise, and meal in the barrel, but he is a landed man, he hath a title to a kingdom, and may not this satisfy him ? If a man, who lived here in England, had a great estate befallen him beyond the seas, and perhaps had no more money at present but just to pay for his voyage, he is content, he knows when he comes to his estate, he shall have money enough ; thou who art a believer, hast a kingdom befallen thee : though thou hast little in thy purse, yet, if thou hast enough to pay for thy voyage, enough to bear thy charges to heaven, it is sufficient. God hath given thee grace, which is the fore-crop, and will give thee glory, which is the after-crop ; and may not this make thee content ?

3. *Branch.* If you have hope of this blessed kingdom, pray often for the coming of this glorious kingdom, 'Thy kingdom come:' only believers can pray heartily for the hastening of the kingdom of glory.

1. They cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who never had the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts: can the guilty prisoner pray that the assizes may come?

2. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who are lovers of the world; they have found paradise, they are in their kingdom already, this is their heaven, and they desire to hear of no other: they are of his mind, who said, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris, he would lose his part in Paradise.

3. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who oppose Christ's kingdom of grace, who break his laws, which are the sceptre of his kingdom, who shoot at those who bear Christ's name, and carry his colours: sure these cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, for then Christ will judge them; and, if they say this prayer, they are hypocrites, they mean not as they speak. But you who have the kingdom of grace set up in your hearts, pray much that the kingdom of glory may hasten, 'Thy kingdom come;' when this kingdom comes, then you shall behold Christ in all his embroidered robes of glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun in all its meridian splendor. When Christ's kingdom comes, the bodies of the saints that sleep in the dust shall be raised in honour, and made like Christ's glorious body; then shall your souls, like diamonds, sparkle with holiness; you shall never have a sinful thought more, you shall be as holy as the angels, you shall be as holy as you would be, and as holy as God would have you to be; then you shall be in a better state than in innocency. Adam was created a glorious creature, but mutable; a bright star; but a falling star: but in the kingdom of heaven is a fixation of happiness; when Christ's kingdom of glory comes, you shall be rid of all your enemies: as Moses said, *Exod. xiv. 13.* 'The Egyptians, whom you have seen to-day, you shall see them no more for-ever.' So those enemies who have plowed on the backs of God's people, and made deep their furrows, when Christ shall come in his glory, you shall see these enemies no more. All Christ's enemies shall be 'put under his feet.' *2 Cor. xv. 2.* and before the wicked be destroyed, the saints shall judge them, *1 Cor. vi. 2.* 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' This will cut the wicked to the heart, that those whom they have formerly scorned and scourged, shall sit as judges upon them, and vote with Christ in his judicial proceedings: O then well may you

pray for the hastening of the kingdom of glory, 'Thy kingdom come.'

4. *Branch.* If you have any good hope of this blessed kingdom, let this make the colour come in your faces, be of sanguine cheerful temper; have you a title to a kingdom, and sad? Rom. v. 2. 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' Christians, the trumpet is ready to sound, an eternal jubilee is at hand, when a freedom from sin shall be proclaimed: your coronation-day is a-coming; it is but putting off your clothes, and laying your head upon a pillow of dust, and you shall be enthroned in a kingdom, and invested with the embroidered robes of glory: doth not all this call for a cheerful spirit? Cheerfulness adorns religion: it is a temper of soul Christ loves, John xiv. 28. 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice.' It makes many suspect heaven is not so pleasant, when they see those that walk thither so sad. How doth the heir rejoice, in hope of the inheritance? Who should rejoice, if not a believer, who is heir of the kingdom, and such a kingdom as eye hath not seen? When the flesh begins to droop, let faith lift up its head, and cause an holy jubilation and rejoicing in the soul.

5. Let the saints long to be in this blessed kingdom. A prince that travels in foreign parts, doth he not long to be in his own nation, that he may be crowned? The bride desires the marriage day, Rev. xxii. 17. 'The spirit and the bride say come: even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Sure our unwillingness to go hence, shews either the weakness of our faith in the belief of the heavenly kingdom, or the strength of our doubtings, whether we have an interest in it. Were our title to heaven more cleared, we should need patience to be content to stay here any longer.

Again, our unwillingness to go hence declares, we love the world too much, and Christ too little. Love (as Aristotle saith) desires union; Did we love Christ as we should, we would desire to be united to him in glory, when we might take our fill of love. Be humbled that we are so unwilling to go hence: let us labour to arrive at that divine temper of soul as Paul had, *Cupio dissolvi*, 'I desire to depart and be with Christ,' Phil. i. 23. We are compassed with a body of sin; should not we long to shake off this viper? We are in Mesech, and the tents of Kedar, in a place where we see God dishonoured; should not we desire to have our pass to be gone? we are in a valley of tears, is it not better being in a kingdom? Here we are combating with Satan; should not we desire to be called out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, that we may receive a victorious crown? O ye saints, breathe after the heavenly kingdom. Though we should be willing to stay to do service, yet we should ambitiously desire to be always sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Think



what it will be to be ever with the Lord : are there any sweeter smiles or embraces than his? Is there any bed so soft as Christ's bosom? Is there any such joy, as to have the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over us? Is there any such honour as to sit upon the throne with Christ? Rev. iii. 21. O then long for the celestial kingdom.

6. Wait for this kingdom of glory. It is not incongruous or improper to long for heaven, yet wait for it; long for it because it is a kingdom, yet wait your Father's good pleasure; God could presently bestow this kingdom, but he sees it good that we should wait a while.

1. Had we the kingdom of heaven presently as soon as ever grace is infused, then God would lose much of his glory. (1.) Where would be our living by faith, which is the grace that brings in the chief revenue of glory to God? Rom. v. 20. (2.) Where would be our suffering for God, which is a way of honouring him, which the angels in heaven are not capable of. (3.) Where would be the active service we are to do for God? Would we have God give us a kingdom, and we do nothing for him before we come there? Would we have rest before labour, a crown before victory? This were disingenuous, Paul was content to stay out of heaven a while, that he might be a means to bring others thither, Phil. i. 23.

(2.) While we wait for the kingdom, our grace is increasing. Every duty, religiously performed, adds a jewel to our crown. Do we desire to have our robes of glory shine brighter? Let us wait and work; the longer we stay for the principle, the greater will the interest be. The husbandman waits till the seed spring up: wait for the harvest of glory, some have their waiting weeks at court; this is your waiting time: Christ saith, 'pray and faint not,' Luke xviii. 1. So wait, and faint not. Be not weary, the kingdom of heaven will make amends for your waiting; 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,' said that dying patriarch, Gen. xlix. 18.

Use V. Comfort to the people of God.

(1.) In all their sufferings. The true saint is, as Luther saith, *hæres crucis*, heir to the cross: affliction is his diet-drink, but here is that may be as bezoar-stone to keep him from fainting, these sufferings bring a kingdom. The hope of the kingdom of heaven, saith Basil, should indulcerate and sweeten all our troubles, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'If we suffer, we shall reign with him:' it is but a short fight, but an eternal triumph: this light suffering produceth 'an eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'A weight of glory.' Things which are precious, the more weighty, the more they are worth, the more weight is in a crown of gold, the more it is worth. 'Tis a weight of glory. 2. 'An eternal weight of glory.' Did this glory last for a

while, it would much abate and embitter the joys of heaven : but the glory of that kingdom runs parallel with eternity ; God will be as a deep sea of blessedness, and the glorified saints shall for ever bathe themselves in that ocean. One day's wearing the crown, will abundantly pay for all the saints' sufferings ; how much more then, when ' they shall reign for ever and ever ? ' Rev. xxii. 5. O let this support under all the calamities and sufferings in this life ; what a vast difference is there between a believer's sufferings and his reward, Rom. viii. 18. ' The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' For a few tears, rivers of pleasure ; for mourning, white robes. This made the primitive Christians laugh at imprisonments, and snatch up torments as so many crowns : though now we drink in a wormwood-cup, here is sugar in the bottom to sweeten it, ' It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

2. Comfort in death : here is that which may take away from God's children the terror of death, they are now entering into the kingdom. Indeed no wonder, if wicked men be appalled and terrified at the approach of death, they die unpardoned. Death carries them to the gaol, where they must lie for ever without bail or mainprize : but why should any of God's children be so scared and half-dead with the thoughts of death ? what hurt doth death do to them, but lead them to a glorious kingdom ? Faith gives a title to a kingdom, death a possession ; let this be a gospel-antidote to expel the fear of death. Hilarion, that blessed man, cried out, *Egredere, anima, egredere, quid times ?* Go forth, my soul, go forth, what fearest thou ? Let them fear death, who do not fear sin ; but let not God's children be over-much troubled at the grim face of that messenger, which brings them to the end of their sorrow, and the beginning of their joy. Death is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. it is a part of the believer's inventory. Is a prince afraid to cross a narrow sea, who shall be crowned when he comes to shore ? Death to the saints shall be an usher to bring them into the presence of the King of glory : this puts lilies and roses into the ghastly face of death, and makes it look amiable. Death brings us to a crown of glory which fades not away : the day of death is better to a believer than the day of his birth ; death is *additus ad gloriam*, an entrance into a blessed eternity. Fear not death, but rather let your hearts revive when you think these rattling wheels of death's chariot are but to carry you home to an everlasting kingdom.

## OF THE THIRD PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 10. *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

WE come next to the third petition, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' This petition consists of two parts.

I. The matter, "Doing of God's will."

II. The manner, "As it is in heaven."

I. The matter of this petition is, "The doing of God's will." "Thy will be done."

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the will of God?*

Ans. There is a twofold will. (1.) *Voluntas decreti*, God's secret will, or the will of his decree; we pray not that God's secret will may be done by us. This secret will cannot be known, it is locked up in God's own breast, and neither man nor angel hath key to open it. (2.) *Voluntas revelata*, God's revealed will. This revealed will is written in the book of scripture, the scripture is a declaration of God's will, it discovers what he would have us do in order to our salvation.

Qu. 2. *What do we pray for in these words, 'Thy will be done?'*

Ans. We pray for two things; 1. For active obedience; that we may do God's will actively in what he commands. 2. For passive; that we may submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts. We pray, that we may do God's will actively, subscribe to all his commands, believe in Jesus, the cardinal grace, lead holy lives. So Austin upon the petition, *Nobis a Deo precamur obedientiam*; we pray that we may actively obey God's will. This is the sum of all religion, the two tables epitomized, the doing of God's will: 'Thy will be done.' We must know God's will before we can do it: knowledge is the eye which must direct the foot of obedience. At Athens there was an altar set up, 'To the unknown God,' Acts xvii. 23. It is as bad to offer the blind to God as the dead. Knowledge is the pillar of fire to give light to practice; but tho' knowledge is requisite, yet the knowledge of God's will is not enough without doing his will: 'Thy will be done.' If one had a system of divinity in his head; if he had all knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. yet, if obedience were wanting, his knowledge were lame, and would not carry him to heaven. Knowing God's will may make a man admired, but it is doing God's will makes him

bleſſed : knowing God's will without doing it, will not crown us with happineſs.

1. The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious, it doth not better the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter-ſun, which hath no heat or influence ; it doth not warm the affections, or purify the conſcience. Judas was a great luminary, he knew God's will, but he was a traitor.

2. Knowing without doing God's will, will make one's caſe worſe ; it will heat hell the hotter, Luke xii. 47. ' The ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.' Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. Thou who haſt knowledge of God's will, but doſt not do it, wherein doſt thou excel an hypocrite ? nay, wherein doſt thou excel the devil, ' who transforms himſelf into an angel of light ?' It is improper to call ſuch Chriſtians, who are knowers of God's will, but not doers of it. It is improper to call him a tradesman who never wrought in his trade ; ſo to call him a Chriſtian, who never wrought in the trade of religion. Let us not reſt in the knowing of God's will. Let it not be ſaid of us, as Plutarch ſpeaks of the Grecians, ' They knew what was juſt, but did it not.' Let us ſet upon this, the doing of God's will, ' Thy will be done.'

Qu. 3. *Why is the doing of God's will ſo requiſite ?*

Anſ. 1. Out of equity. God may juſtly claim a right to our obedience ; he is our founder, and we have our being from him ; and it is but equal that we ſhould do his will, at whoſe word we were created. God is our benefactor ; it is but juſt, that, if God give us our allowance, we ſhould give him our allegiance.

2. The great deſign of God in the word is, to make us doers of his will. *1ſt*, All God's royal edicts and precepts are to bring us to this, to be doers of his will ; what needed God been at the pains to give us the copy of his law, and write it out with his own finger elſe ? The word of God is not only a rule of knowledge, but of duty, Deut. xiii. 4. and xxvi. 16. ' This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do theſe ſtatutes ; thou ſhalt therefore keep and do them.' If you tell your children what is your mind, it is not only that they may know your will, but do it. God gives us his word, as a maſter gives his ſcholar a copy, to write after it ; he gives it as his will and teſtament, that we ſhould be the executors to ſee it performed. *2dly*, This is the end of all God's promiſes, to draw us to God's will ; the promiſes are loadſtones to obedience, Deut. xi. 27. ' A bleſſing if ye obey ;' as a father gives his ſon money to bribe him to obedience, Deut. xxviii. 1. ' If thou ſhalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will ſet thee on high above

all the nations of the earth ; blessed shalt thou be in the city and in the field.' The promises are a royal charter settled upon obedience. *3dly*, The minatory part of the word, the threatenings of God, stand as the angel with a flaming sword to deter us from sin, and make us doers of God's will, Deut. xi. 28. 'A curse if ye will not obey.' Psal. lxxviii. 21. 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses.' These threatenings do often take hold of men in this life : they are made examples, and hung up in chains to scare others from disobedience, *4thly*, All God's providences are to make us doers of his will. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for harvest, so all his various providences are to bring on the harvest of obedience.

1. Afflictions are to make us do God's will, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 'When Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly.' The rod hath this voice, 'be doers of God's will.' Affliction is called a furnace, Isa. xxxvii. 19. 'The furnace melts the metal, and then it is cast into a new mould.' God's furnace is to melt us and mould us into obedience.

2. God's mercies are to make us do his will, Rom. xii. 1. 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.' Body is by Synecdoche put for the whole man ; if the soul should not be presented to God as well as the body, it could not be reasonable service ; now, saith the apostle, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, present yourselves a living sacrifice.' Mercies are the strongest obligations to duty, Hol. xi. 4. 'I drew them with the cords of a man ;' that is, with golden cords of my mercy. In a word, all that is written in the law or gospel tends to this, that we shall be doers of God's will, 'Thy will be done.'

3. By doing the will of God, we evidence sincerity. As Christ said in another sense, John x. 25. 'The works which I do, bear witness of me :' So, it is not at all our golden words, if we could speak like angels, but our works, our doing of God's will, which bears witness of our sincerity. We judge not of the health of a man's body by his high colour, but by the pulse of the arm, where the blood chiefly stirs ; so a Christian's soundness is not to be judged by his profession ; what is this high colour ? but the estimate of a Christian is to be taken by his obediential acting, his doing the will of God ; this is the best certificate, and letters testimonial to shew for heaven.

4. Doing God's will much propagates the gospel ; this is the diamond that sparkles in religion. Others cannot see what faith is in the heart ; but when they see we do God's will on earth, this makes them have a venerable opinion of religion, and become proselytes to it. Julian, in one of his epistles,

writing to Arsatius, saith, “ that the Christian religion did much flourish, by the sanctity and obedience of them that professed it.”

5. By doing God’s will, we shew our love to Christ, John xiv. 21. ‘ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.’ What greater love to Christ, than to do his will, though it cross our own? Every one would be thought to love Christ; but, how shall that be known but by this; Do you do his will on earth? *Neque principem veneramus, si odio ejus leges habemus*, Iside. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves Christ’s person, when he flights his commands. Not to do God’s will on earth, is a great evil. It is (1.) Sinful. (2.) Foolish. (3.) Dangerous.

(1.) It is sinful. (1.) We go against our prayers; we pray, *fiat voluntas tua*, thy will be done, and yet we do not obey his will; we confute our own prayer. (2.) We go against our vow in baptism; we have vowed to fight under the Lord’s banner, to obey his sceptre, and this vow we have often renewed in the Lord’s supper: if we do not God’s will on earth, we are forsworn, and God will indict us of perjury.

(2.) Not to do God’s will on earth, is foolish; (1.) Because there is no standing it out against God. If we do not obey him, we cannot resist him, 1 Cor. x. 22. ‘ Are we stronger than he? Job xl. 9. ‘ Hast thou an arm like God?’ Canst thou measure arms with him? To oppose God, is, as if a child should fight with an archangel; as if a heap of briars should put themselves into a battalia against the flame. (2.) Not to do God’s will is foolish, because, if we do not God’s will, we do the devil’s will. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? To do his will that seeks our ruin?

Qu. *But are any so wicked as to do the devil’s will?*

Ans. Yes: John viii. 44. ‘ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do.’ When a man tells a lie doth he not do the devil’s will? Acts v. 3. ‘ Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?’

(3.) Not to do God’s will is dangerous; it brings a spiritual *premunire*. If God’s will be not done by us; he will have his will upon us; if we obey not God’s will in commanding, we shall obey his will in punishing, 2 Theff. i. 7. ‘ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty angels in flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not his gospel.’ Either we must do God’s will, or suffer it.

6. Whatever God wills us to do, is for our benefit: behold here self interest. As if a king commands his subject to dig in a mine of gold, and then gives him all the gold he had digged: God bids us do his will, and this is for our good, Deut. x. 13. ‘ And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of

thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and keep the commandments of the Lord, which I command thee this day for thy good?' It is God's will that we should repent, and this is for our good, repentance ushers in remission, Acts iii. 9. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.' It is God's will that we should believe; and why is it, but that we should be crowned with salvation? Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believes shall be saved.' What God wills is not so much our duty, as our privilege; he bids us obey his voice, and it is greatly for our good, Jer. vii. 23. 'Obey my voice and I will be your God.' I will not only give you my angels to be your guard, but myself to be your portion; my Spirit shall be yours to sanctify you, my love shall be yours to comfort you, my mercy shall be yours to save you, 'I will be your God.'

7. To do God's will, is our honour. A person thinks it an honour to have a king speak to him to do such a thing: the angels count it their highest honour in heaven to do God's will; *servire Deo regnare est*, to serve God, is to reign. *Non onerant nos, sed ornant*, Salvian. How cheerfully did the rowers row the barge that carried Cæsar: to be employed in his barge was an honour: to be employed in doing God's will is *insigne honoris*, the highest ensign of honour that a mortal creature is capable of. Christ's precepts do not burden us, but adorn us.

8. To do God's will on earth, makes us like Christ, and akin to Christ. (1.) It makes us like Christ: is it not our prayer that we may be like Christ? Jesus Christ did his Father's will, John vi. 38. 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' God the Father and Christ, as they have but one essence, so but one will; Christ's will was melted into his Father's, John iv. 34. 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.' By our doing God's will on earth, we resemble Christ, nay, we are akin to Christ, and are of the blood-royal of heaven. Alexander called himself cousin to the gods; what honour is it to be akin to Christ! Mat. xii. 50. 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Did king Solomon arise off his throne to meet his mother and set her on a throne by him? 1 Kings iii. 19. Such honour will Christ bestow on such as are doers of God's will, he will salute them as his kindred, and set them on a glorious throne in the amphitheatre of heaven.

9. Doing God's will on earth brings peace in life and death. (1.) In life, Ps. xix. 11. 'In keeping thy precepts there is great reward,' not only after keeping them, but in keeping them; when we walk closely with God in obedience, there is a secret joy let into the soul, and how swiftly and cheerfully do the wheels of the soul move when they are oiled with the oil of

gladness? (2.) Peace in death. When Hezekiah thought he was about to die, what gave him comfort? This, that he had done the will of God, Isa. xxxviii. 3. ‘Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and have done that which is good in thy sight.’ It was Augustus’ wish, that he might have an easy death, without much pain. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, ‘we have endeavoured to do God’s will on earth.’ Did you ever hear any cry out on their death-bed, that they have done God’s will too much? No, hath it not been that they have done his will no more, that they come so short in their obedience? Doing God’s will, will be both your comfort and your crown.

10. If we are not doers of God’s will, we shall be looked upon as contemners of God’s will: let God say what he will, yet men will go on in sin; this is to contemn God, Ps. x. 13. ‘Wherefore do the wicked contemn God?’ To contemn God is worse than to rebel. The tribes of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam, because he made their yoke heavier, 1 Kings xii. 16. But to contemn God is worse, it is to slight him: to contemn God is to put a scorn upon him, and affront him to his face; and an affront will make God draw his sword. Thus I have answered that question, why doing God’s will on earth is so requisite? It is as necessary as salvation.

4. Qu. *In what manner are we to do God’s will, that we may find acceptance?*

Ans. The manner of doing God’s will is the chief thing. The schoolmen say well. *Modus rei cadit sub precepto*, ‘The manner of a thing is as well required as the thing itself:’ If a man build an house, if he doth it not according to the mind of the owner, he likes it not, but thinks all his charges lost? so if we do not God’s will in the right manner, it is not accepted; we must not only do what God appoints, but as God appoints: here lies the very life-blood of religion. So I come to answer this great question, ‘In what manner are we to do God’s will, that we may find acceptance?’

Ans. We do God’s will acceptably, when we do duties spiritually, Phil. iii. 3. ‘We worship God in the spirit.’ To serve God spiritually, is to do duties *ab interno principio*, from an inward principle; The pharisees were very exact about the external part of God’s worship; how zealous were they in the outward observation of the sabbath, charging Christ with the breach of it? But all this was but outward obedience, there was nothing of spirituality in it: then we do God’s will acceptably, when we serve him from a renewed principle of grace. A crab-tree may bear as well as a pearmain, but it is not so good fruit as the other, because it doth not come from so sweet a root: an unregenerate person may do as much external obedi-



ence as a child of God, he may pray as much, hear as much, but his obedience is harsh and sour, because it doth not come from the sweet and pleasant root of grace ; the inward principle of obedience is faith, therefore it is called ' the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. But why must this silver thread of faith run through the whole work of obedience ?

*Ans.* Because faith looks at Christ in every duty, it toucheth the hem of his garment ; and through Christ, both the person and the offering are accepted, Eph. i. 6.

2. We do God's will acceptably, when we prefer his will before all other ; if God wills one thing, and man wills the contrary, we do not obey man's will, but rather God's Acts iv. 19. ' Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.' God saith, ' Thou shalt not make a graven image,' king Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image to be worshipped ; but the three children, or rather champions, resolve God's will shall take place, and they would obey him, though with the loss of their lives, Dan. iii. 19. ' Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'

3. We do God's will acceptably, when we do God's will as it is done in heaven, that is, as the angels do it : to do God's will as the angels *similitudinem notat, non aequalitatem*, Brugen-sis : denotes this much, that we are to resemble them, and make them our pattern. Though we cannot equal the angels in doing God's will, yet we must imitate them ; a child cannot write so well as the scrivener, yet he imitates the copy. In particular.

1. We do God's will as the angels do it in heaven, when we do God's will regularly, *sine deflexu*, we do according to the divine institutions, not decrees of councils, or traditions : this is to do God's will as the angels ; they do it regularly, they do nothing but what is commanded ; angels are not for ceremonies ; as there are statute-laws in the land which bind, so the scripture is God's statute-law, which we must exactly observe, The watch is set by the dial ; then our obedience is right, when it goes by the sun-dial of the word. If obedience hath not the word for its rule, it is not doing God's will, but our own : it is will-worship, Dent. xii. 32. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle according to the pattern, Exod. xxv. 40. If Moses had left out any thing in the pattern, or added any thing to it, it would have been very provoking ; to mix any thing of our own devising in God's worship, is to go beside, yea, contrary to the pattern ; God's worship is the apple of his eye, that which he is most tender of ; and there is nothing he hath more shewed his displeasure against, than the corrupting his worship. How severely did God punish Nadab

and Abihu for offering up strange fire ? Lev. x. 2. that is, such fire as God had not sanctified on the altar : whatever is not divinely appointed, is offering up strange fire. There is in many, a strange itch after superstition ; they love a gaudy religion, and are more for the pomp of worship than the purity ; this cannot be pleasing to God ; for, as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served, man will be so bold as to prescribe for him. To thrust human inventions into sacred things, is a doing our own will, not God's ; and he will say, *quis quæ sivit hoc ?* Who hath required this at your hand ? Isa. i. 12. Then we do God's will as it is done in heaven, when we do it regularly, we reverence God's institutions, and the mode of worship, which hath the stamp of divine authority upon it.

2. We do God's will as it is done by the angels in heaven, when we do it entirely, *sine mutilatione*, we do all God's will. The angels in heaven do all that God commands, they leave nothing of his will undone, Ps. cxxx. 20. 'Ye his angels that do his commandments.' If God sent an angel to the virgin Mary, he goes on God's errand ; if he gives his angels a charge to minister for the saints, they obey, Heb. i. 14. It cannot stand with angelical obedience, to leave the least *iota* of God's will unfulfilled : this is to do God's will as the angels, when we do all his will, *quicquid propter Deum fit æqualiter fit*. This was God's charge to Israel, Numb. xv. 40. 'Remember to do all my commandments.' And it was spoken of David, Acts xiii. 22. 'I have found David, a man after mine own heart, who will perform all my will,' Gr. all my wills. Every command hath the same authority ; and if we do God's will uprightly, we do it uniformly, we obey every part and branch of his will, we join first and second table. Surely we owe that to God our Father, which, the papists say, we owe to our mother the church, unlimited obedience ; we must incline to every command, as the needle moves that way which the loadstone draws.

(2.) This discovers the unsoundness of many, who do God's will by halves, they pick and chuse in religion, they in some things comply with God's will, but not in others ; like a foundered horse, who sets but some of his feet on the ground, he favours one foot. He who is to play upon a lute, must strike upon every string, or he spoils all the music. God's commandments may be compared to a ten-stringed lute, we must obey God's will in every command, strike upon every string, or we can make no good melody in religion. The badger hath one foot shorter than the other ; hypocrites are shorter in some duties than others ; some will pray, not give alms ; hear the word, not forgive their enemies ; receive the sacra-

ment, not make restitution : how can they be holy, who are not just ? Hypocrites profess fair, but when it comes to sacrificing the Isaac, crucifying the beloved son, or parting with some of their estate for Christ, here they stick, and say as Naaman, 2 Kings v. 18. ' In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant.' This is far from doing God's will as the angel do ; God likes not such as do his will by halves if your servant should do some of your work, which you set him about, but not all ; how would you like that ?

Obj. *But who is able to do all God's will ?*

Ans. Though we cannot do all God's will legally, yet we may evangelically : which is,

(1.) When we mourn that we can do God's will no better : when we fail, we weep, Rom. vii. 24.

(2.) When it is the desire of our soul to do God's whole will, Ps. cxix. 5. ' O that my ways were directed to keep thy precepts.' What a child of God wants in strength, he makes up in desire, *in magnis voluisse sat est*.

(3.) When we endeavour *quod conatum* to do the whole will of God. A father bids his child lift such a burden, the child is not able to lift it, but he tries and does his endeavour to lift it ; the father accepts of it, as if he had done it : this is to do God's will evangelically, and God is pleased to take it in good part ; though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it sincerely, *sine fuco*. To do God's will sincerely, lies in two things ;

1. To do it out of a pure respect to God's command.

2. With a pure eye to God's glory.

1. To do God's will out of a pure respect to God's command. Abraham's sacrificing Isaac was contrary to flesh and blood : to sacrifice the son of his love, the son of the promise, and that no other hand but the father's own should do this, here was hard service : but, because God commanded it, out of pure respect to the command, Abraham obeyed : this is to do God's will aright, when though we feel no present joy or comfort in duty, yet, because God commands, we obey ; not comfort, but the command is the ground of duty : thus the angels do God's will in heaven ; God's command is the weight sets the wheels of their obedience a-going.

2. To do God's will sincerely, is to do it with a pure eye to God's glory. The Pharisees did the will of God in giving alms ; but that which was a dead fly in the ointment, was, that they did not aim at God's glory, but vain glory ; they blew a trumpet. Jehu did the will of God in destroying the Baal-worshippers, and God commended him for doing it ; but because he aimed more at settling himself in the kingdom, than

at the glory of God, therefore God looked upon it no better than murder, and said he would avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, Hof. ii. 4. Let us look to our ends in obedience : though we shoot short let us take a right aim ; one may do God's will, yet not with a perfect heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. ' Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' The action was right for the matter, but his aim was not right ; that action which wants a good aim, wants a good issue ; he doth God's will rightly, that doth it uprightly, his end is to honour God, and lift up his name in the world. A gracious soul makes God his centre. As Joab, when he had taken Rabbah, sent for king David, that he might carry away the glory of the victory, 2 Sam. xii. 27. so when a gracious soul hath done any duty, he desires that the glory of all may be given to God, 1 Pet. iv. 11. ' That in all things God may be glorified.' This is to do God's will as the angels, when we not only advance God's glory, but design his glory ; the angels are said to cast their crowns before the throne, Rev. iv. 10. Crowns are signs of greatest honour, but these crowns the angels lay at the Lord's feet, to shew they ascribe the glory of all they do to him.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it willingly, *sine murmuratione*. The angels love to be employed in God's service ; it is the angels' heaven to serve God : they willingly descend from heaven to earth, when they bring messages from God, and glad tidings to the church ; now, heaven being a place of such joy, the angels would not leave it a minute of an hour, only that they take such infinite delight in doing God's will. We do resemble the angels, when we do God's will willingly, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. ' And thou Solomon, my son, serve the Lord with a willing mind.' God's people are called a willing people, Ps. cx. 3. Heb. a people of willingness ; they give God a free-will offering ; though they cannot serve him perfectly, they serve him willingly : a hypocrite, though he doth *facere bonum*, yet not *velle*, he hath no delight in duty ; he doth it rather out of fear of hell, than love to God ; when he doth God's will, yet it is against his will, *virtus nolentium nulla est*. Cain brought his sacrifice, but grudgingly ; his worship was rather a task than an offering, rather penance than a sacrifice ; he did God's will, but against his will ; we must be carried upon the wings of delight in every duty, Israel were to blow the trumpets when they offered burnt-offerings, Num. x. 10. Blowing the trumpets was to shew their joy and cheerfulness in serving God ; we must read and hear the word with delight, Jer. xv. 15. ' Thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' A pious soul goes to the word as to a feast, or as one would go

with delight to hear music. Sleidan reports, that the Protestants in France had a church they called Paradise, because, when they were in the house of God, they thought themselves in paradise: the saints flock as doves to the windows of God's house, Isa. lx. 8. Who are these that flock as doves to the windows? Not that a truly regenerate person is always in the same cheerful temper of obedience; he may sometimes find an indisposition and weariness of soul, but his weariness is his burden, he is weary of his weariness, he prays, weeps, useth all means to regain that alacrity and freedom in God's service, that he was wont to have: this is to do God's will acceptably, when we do it willingly; it is this crowns all our services; delight in duty is better than duty. The musician is not commended for playing long, but well; it is not how much we do, but how much we love, Ps. cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy law!' Love is as musk among linen, that perfumes it; love perfumes obedience, and makes it go up to heaven as incense. This is doing God's will as the angels in heaven do it; they are ravished with delight while they are praising God, therefore the angels are said to have harps in their hands, Rev. xv. 2. as a sign of their cheerfulness in God's service.

4. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do God's will fervently, *sine remissione*, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving God;' a metaphor from water when it seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in zeal and fervency: the angels serve God with fervour and intenseness; the angels are called seraphims, from an Hebrew word which signifies to burn, to shew how the angels are all on fire, Psalm civ. 4. they burn in love and zeal in doing God's will; grace turns a saint into a seraphim; Aaron must put burning coals to the incense, Exod. xvi. 12. Incense was a type of prayer, burning coals of zeal, to shew that the fire of zeal must be put to the incense of prayer. Formality starves duty; when we serve God dully and coldly, is this like the angels? Duty without fervency is as a sacrifice without fire; we should ascend to heaven in a fiery chariot of devotion.

5. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we give God the best in every service, Numb. xviii. 29. 'Out of all your gifts, ye shall offer of all the best thereof,' Num. xxviii. 7. 'In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.' The Jews might not offer to the Lord wine that was small or mixed, but the strong wine, to imply, that we must offer to God the best, the strongest of our affections: if the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that, Cant. viii. 2. 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.' Thus the angels in heaven do God's will: they serve him in the best

manner ; they give him their seraphic high-stringed praises : he who loves God, gives him the cream of his obedience. God challenged the fat of all the sacrifice as his due, Levit. iii. 16. Hypocrites care not what services they bring to God, they think to put him off with any thing, they put no cost in their duties, Gen. iv. 3. ‘ Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.’ The Holy Ghost took notice of Abel’s offering, that it was costly. ‘ He brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof,’ Gen. iv. 4. But when he speaks of Cain’s offering, he only saith, ‘ He brought of the fruit of the ground.’ Then we do God’s will aright, when we do offer *pinguia*, we dedicate to him the best. Domitian would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold. God will have the best we have, golden services.

6. We do God’s will as the angels in heaven, when we do it readily and swiftly : the angels do not dispute or reason the case, but as soon as they have their charge and commission from God ; they immediately obey : and, to shew how ready they are to execute God’s will, the cherubims representing the angels, are described with wings, to shew how swift and forward they are in their obedience, it is as if they had wings, Dan. ix. 21. ‘ The man Gabriel (that was an angel) being caused to fly swiftly.’ Thus should we do God’s will as the angels ; as soon as ever God speaks the word, we should be ambitious to obey : alas ! how long is it sometimes ere we can get leave of our hearts to go to a duty ? Christ went more readily *ad crucem*, than we to the throne of grace ; how many disputes and excuses have we ? is this to do God’s will as the angels in heaven do it ? O let us shake off this backwardness to duty, as Paul shook of the viper, *Nescit tarda mollimina spiritus sancti gratia* ; Zech. v. 9. ‘ I saw two women, and the wind was in their wings.’ Wings are swift, but wind in the wings is great swiftnels ; such readiness should be in our obedience. As Peter, as soon as ever Christ commanded him to let down his net, at Christ’s word he presently let down the net, and you know what success he had, Luke v. 4. It was prophesied of such as were brought home to Christ, Ps. xviii. 44. ‘ As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.’

7. We do God’s will as the angels in heaven, when we do it constantly ; the angels are never weary of doing God’s will, they serve God day and night, Rev. vii. 17. thus must we imitate the angels, Ps. cvi. 3. ‘ Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.’ Constancy crowns obedience. *Non cepisse, sed persequisse, virtutis est*, Cypr. Our obedience must be like the fire of the altar, which was continually kept burning, Lev. vi. 13. Hypocrites soon give over doing God’s will ; like the Chrysolite which is of a golden colour, in the morning it is very

bright to look on, but towards evening it grows dull ; and hath lost its splendor. We should continue in doing God's will, because of that great loss that will befall us if we give over doing God's will.

(1.) A loss of honour, Rev. iii. 11. ' That no man take thy crown ; ' implying, if the church of Philadelphia left off her obedience, she would lose her crown, viz. her honour and reputation. Apostacy creates infamy : Judas came from an apostle to be a traitor, it was a dishonour.

(2.) If we give over our obedience it is a loss of all that hath been already done ; as if one should work in silver, and then pick out all the stitches. All a man's prayers are lost, all the sabbaths he hath kept are lost, he doth unravel all his good works, Ezek. xviii. 24. ' All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. ' He undoes all he hath done ; as if one draws a curious picture with the pencil, and then come with his sponge and wipe out all again.

(3.) A loss of the soul and happiness : we were in a fair way for heaven, but, by leaving off doing God's will, we miss the excellent glory, and are plunged deeper in damnation, 2 Pet. ii. 21. ' It had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment. ' Therefore let us continue in doing God's will ; constancy sets the crown upon the head of obedience. Thus you see how we are to do God's will acceptably.

*Use I. Branch 1.* See hence our impotency, we have no innate power to do God's will ; what need we pray ' Thy will be done, ' if we have power of ourselves to do it ? I wonder free-willers pray this petition.

2. *Branch.* If we are to do God's will on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven, see then the folly of those who go by a wrong pattern ; they do as the most of their neighbours do ; if they talk vain on the sabbath, they do but as their neighbours do ; if now and then they swear an oath, it is the custom of their neighbours to do so ; but we are to do God's will, as the angels in heaven : do the angels do such things ? We must make the angels our patterns, and not our neighbours : if our neighbours do the devil's will, shall we do so too ? if our neighbours go to hell, shall we go thither too for company ?

3. *Branch.* See here that which may make us long to be in heaven, then we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels do : alas, how defective are we in our obedience here ! how far do we fall short ? We cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting ; our holy things are blemished, like the moon, which, when it shines brightest, hath a dark spot in it ; but in heaven we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels in glory.

*Use II. Of reproof.*

1 *Branch.* It reproves such as do not God's will : they have the knowledge of God's will, (knowledge they count an ornament) but though they know God's will, yet they do it not.

(1.) They know what God would have them avoid : they know they should not swear, Mat. v. 34. "Swear not at all." Jer. xxiii. 10. 'For this sin the land mourns.' Yet though they pray 'hallowed be thy name,' they profane it by shooting oaths like chain-bullets against heaven : they know they should abstain from fornication and uncleanness, yet they cannot but bite at the devil's hook, if he bait it with flesh, Jude 7.

(2.) They know what God would have them practise, but they "leave undone those things which they ought to have done." They know it is the will of God they should be true in their promises, just in their dealings, good in their relations ; but they do not the will of God : they know they should read the scriptures, consult with God's oracle ; but the Bible, like rusty armour, is hung up, and seldom used ; they look oftener upon a pack of cards than a Bible ; they know their houses should be *palestræ pietatis*, nurseries of piety, yet have no face of religion in them ; they do not perfume their houses with prayer. What hypocrites are these to kneel down in the church, and lift up their eyes to heaven, and say, 'Thy will be done,' yet have no care at all to do God's will ? What is this but to hang out a flag of defiance against heaven, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

2. *Branch.* It reproves those who do not God's will in a right acceptable manner.

(1.) They do not God's will entirely, all God's will : they will obey God in some things, but not in others ; as if a servant should do some of your work you set him about, but not the rest. Jehu destroyed the idolatry of Baal, but let the golden calves of Jeroboam stand, 2 Kings x. 30. Some will observe the duties of the second table, but not of the first. Others make an high profession, as if their tongues have been touched with a coal from God's altar, but live idly, and out of a calling ; these the apostle complains of, 2 Thess. iii. 11. 'We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all.' Living by faith, and living in a calling, must go together : this is an evil thing, not to do all God's will.

(2.) They do not God's will ardently nor chearfully ; they do not put coals to the incense ; they bring their sacrifice, but not their heart : this is far from doing God's will as the angels ; this loseth the reward : how can God like this, to serve him as if we served him not ? How can God mind our duties, when we ourselves scarce mind them ?

*Use III. Of examination.*

Let us examine all our actions, whether they are according



to God's will. The will of God is the rule and standard, it is the sun dial by which we must set all our actions : he is no good workman, that doth not work by rule ; he can be no good Christian who goes not according to the rule of God's will. Let us examine our actions whether they do *quadrare*, agree to the will of God : are your speeches according to God's will ? are our words favoury, being seasoned with grace ? is our apparel according to God's will ? 1 Tim. ii. 9. ' In like manner, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel ;' not wanton and garish to invite comers. Our diet, is it according to God's will ? do we hold the golden bridle of temperance, and only take so much as may rather satisfy nature than surfeit it ? Too much oil chokes the lamp. Is our whole carriage and behaviour according to God's will ? are we patterns of prudence and piety ? do we keep up the credit of religion, and shine as lights in the world ? We pray ' Thy will be done' as it is in heaven ; are we like our pattern ? would the angels do this if they were on earth ; would Jesus Christ do this ? This is to christianize, this is to be saints of degrees, when we live our prayer, and our actions are the counter-pane of God's will.

*Use IV. Of exhortation.*

Let us be doers of the will of God, ' Thy will be done.'

1. It is our wisdom to do God's will, Deut. iv. 6. ' Keep and do these statutes, for this is your wisdom.'

2. It is our safety. Hath not misery always attended the doing of our own will, and happiness the doing of God's will ?

(1.) Misery hath always attended the doing of our own will. Our first parents left God's will to fulfil their own, ' in eating the forbidden fruit ;' and what came of it ? The apple had a bitter core in it, they purchased a curse for themselves and all their posterity. King Saul left God's will to do his own ; he spares Agag, and the best of the sheep, and what was the issue, but the loss of his kingdom ?

(2.) Happiness hath always attended the doing of God's will. Joseph obeyed God's will, in refusing the embraces of his mistress ; and was not this his preferment ? God raised him to be the second man in the kingdom. Daniel did God's will contrary to the king's decree ; he bowed his knee in prayer to God, and did not God make all Persia bow their knees to Daniel ?

(3.) The way to have our will, is to do God's will. Would not we have a blessing in our estate ? then let us do God's will, Deut. xxviii. 1, 3. ' If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth : blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.' This is the way to have a good harvest. Would we have a blessing in our souls ? then let us do God's will, Jer. vii. 23.

‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God;’ I will entail myself upon you, as an everlasting portion; my grace shall be yours to sanctify you, my mercy shall be yours to save you. You see you lose nothing by doing God’s will, this is the way to have your will; let God have his will in being obeyed, and you shall have your will in being saved.

*Qu. How shall we come to do God’s will aright?*

*Ans.* 1. Get sound knowledge; we must know God’s will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. The papists make ignorance the mother of devotion, but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error, Matth. xxii. 29. ‘Ye err, not knowing the scripture.’ We must know God’s will before we can do it aright. Affection without knowledge, is like a horse full of mettle, but his eyes are out.

2. If we would do God’s will aright, let us labour for self-denial; unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God’s will; God’s will and ours are like the wind and tide when they are contrary; God wills one thing, we will another; God calls us to be crucified to the world; by nature we love the world; God calls us to forgive our enemies, by nature we bear malice in our hearts: God’s will and ours are contrary, like the wind and tide; and till we can cross our own will, we shall never fulfil God’s.

3. Let us get humble hearts: pride is the spring of disobedience, Exod. v. 2. ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?’ A proud man thinks it below him to stoop to God’s will. Be humble; the humble soul saith, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ He puts as it were, a blank paper into God’s hand; and bids him write what he will, he will subscribe to it.

4. Beg grace and strength of God to do his will, Pf. cxliii. 10. ‘Teach me to do thy will:’ as if David had said, Lord, I need not be taught to do my own will, I can do it fast enough, but teach me to do thy will. And that which may add wings to prayer, is God’s gracious promise, ‘I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes;’ Ezek. xxxvi. 27. If the loadstone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move; if God’s Spirit enable, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God’s will.

II. In this petition, ‘Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,’ we pray “That we may have grace to submit to God’s will patiently in what he inflicts.” The text is to be understood as well of suffering God’s will as of doing it; so Maldonet, and the most judicious interpreters. I shall speak now of patient submission to God’s will in whatever he inflicts, ‘thy will be done.’ This should be the temper of a good Chris-

tian, when he is under any disastrous providence, to lie quietly at God's feet, and say, 'thy will be done.'

Qu. 1. *What this patient submission to God's will is not?*

Ans. There is something looks like patience which is not; namely, when a man bears a thing because he cannot help it; he takes affliction as his fate and destiny, therefore he endures that quietly which he cannot avoid; this is rather necessity than patience.

Qu. 2. *What it is may stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. A Christian may be sensible of affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will, we ought not to be Stoics, insensible and unconcerned with God's dealings; like the sons of Deucalion, who (as the Poets say) were begotten of a stone. Christ was sensible when he sweat great drops of blood, but there was submission to God's will, Mat. xxvi. 39. 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' We are bid to humble ourselves under God's hand, 1 Pet. v. 6. which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

2. A Christian may weep under an affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will. God allows tears; it is a sin to be 'without natural affection,' Rom. i. 31. Grace makes the heart tender; *strangulate inclusus dolor*; weeping gives vent to sorrow, *expletur lachrymis dolor*. Joseph wept over his dead father; Job, when he had so much ill news brought him at once, rent his mantle, an expression of grief, but did not tear his hair in anger; only worldly grief must not be immoderate; a vein may bleed too much; the water riseth too high when it overflows the banks.

3. A Christian may complain in his affliction, yet be submissive to God's will, Psal. cxlii. 2. 'I cried to the Lord with my voice, I poured out my complaint before him.' We may (being under oppression) tell God how it is with us, and desire him to write down our injuries. Shall not the child complain to his father when he is wronged? An holy complaint may stand with patient submission to God's will: but, though we may complain to God, we must not complain of God.

Qu. 3. *What is it cannot stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. Discontentedness with providence. Discontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and, both these, must needs raise a storm of passion in the soul. God having touched the apple of our eye, and smitten us in that we loved, we are touchy and sullen, and God shall not have a good look from us, Gen. iv. 6. 'Why art thou wroth?' Like a sullen bird, that is angry, and beats herself against the cage.

2. Murmuring cannot stand with submission to God's will; murmuring is the height of impatience, it is a kind of mutiny in the soul against God, Numb. xxi. 5. 'The people spake against God.' When a cloud of sorrow is gathered in the soul, and this cloud doth not only drop into tears, but out of this cloud comes hail-stones, murmuring words against God, this is far from patient submission to God's will. When water is hot the scum boils up; when the heart is heated with anger against God, then this scum boils up. Murmuring is very evil; it springs, 1. From pride: men think they have deserved better at God's hand; and, when they begin to swell they spit poison. 2. Distrust; men believe not that God can make a treacle of poison, bring good out of all their troubles, therefore they murmur, Psal. cvi. 24. 'They believed not his word, but murmured.' Men murmur at God's providences, because they distrust his promises; God hath much ado to bear this sin, Numb. xiv. 27. This is far from submission to God's will.

3. Discomposedness of spirit cannot stand with quiet submission to God's will. When a man saith, I am so encompassed with trouble, that I know not how to get out: head and heart are so taken up, that a person is not fit to pray. When the strings of a lute are snarled, the lute can make no good music; so, when a Christian's spirits are perplexed and disturbed, he cannot make melody in his heart to the Lord. To be under a discomposure of mind, is as when an army is routed, one runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder; so, when a Christian is in an hurry of mind, his thoughts run up and down distracted, as if he were undone; this cannot stand with patient submission to God's will.

4. Self-apology cannot stand with submission to God's will; instead of being humbled under God's hand, a person justifies himself. A proud sinner stands upon his own defence, and is ready to accuse God of unrighteousness, which is, as if we should tax the sun with darkness: this is far from submission to God's will. God smote Jonah's gourd, and he stands upon his own vindication, Jonah iv. 9. 'I do well to be angry to the death.' What, to be angry with God! and to justify this, 'I do well to be angry!' this was strange to come from a prophet, and was far from this prayer, Christ hath taught us, 'Thy will be done.'

Qu. 4. *What this patient submission to God's will is?*

Ans. It is a gracious frame of soul, whereby a Christian is content to be at God's disposal, and doth acquiesce in his wisdom, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' Acts xxi. 14. 'The will of the Lord be done.' That I may further illustrate this, I shall shew you wherein

this submission to the will of God lies; it lies chiefly in three things.

(1.) In acknowledging God's hand; seeing God in the affliction, Job v. 6. 'Affliction ariseth not out of the dust;' it comes not by chance. Job did eye God in all that beset him, Job i. 22. 'The Lord hath taken away:' He complains not of the Chaldeans or the influence of the planets; he looks beyond second causes, he sees God in the affliction, 'The Lord hath taken away.' There can be no submission to God's will, till there be an acknowledging of God's hand.

(2.) Patient submission to God's will lies in our justifying of God, 'Psal. xxii. 2. 'O my God, I cry unto thee, yet thou hearest not, thou turnest a deaf ear to me in my affliction;' ver. 3. 'But thou art holy.' God is holy and just, not only when he punisheth the wicked, but when he afflicts the righteous. Tho' God put wormwood in our cup, yet we vindicate God, and proclaim his righteousness. As Mauritius the emperor, when he saw his son slain before his eyes, *justus es, Domine*, righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways. We justify God, and confess he punisheth us less than we deserve, Ezra ix. 13.

(3.) Patient submission to God's will lies in the accepting of the punishment, Lev. xxvi. 41. 'And they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.' Accepting the punishment: that is, taking all that God doth in good part. He who accepts of the punishment, saith, 'good is the rod of the Lord;' he kisseth the rod, yea, bleisseth God that he would use such a merciful severity, rather to afflict him than to lose him. This is patient submission to God's will.

This patient submission to God's will in affliction shews a great deal of wisdom and piety. The skill of a pilot is most discerned in a storm, and a Christian's grace in the storm of affliction; and indeed this submission to God's will is most requisite for us while we live here in this lower region. In heaven there will be no need of patience more than there is need of the star-light when the sun shines. In heaven there will be all joy, and what need of patience then? It requires no patience to wear a crown of gold; but while we live here in a valley of tears, there needs patient submission to God's will, Heb. x. 36. 'Ye have need of patience.'

1. The Lord sometimes lays heavy affliction upon us, 'Psal. xxxviii. 2. 'Thy hand presseth me sore.' The word in the original for 'afflicted,' signifies to be 'melted.' God sometimes melts his people in a furnace.

2. God sometimes lays divers afflictions upon us, Job ix. 17. 'He multiplies my wounds.' God shoots divers sorts of arrows:

(1.) Sometimes God afflicts with poverty. The widow had

nothing left her save a pot of oil, 1 Kings xvii. 12. Poverty is a great temptation. To have an estate almost reduced to nothing, is hard to flesh and blood, Ruth i. 20. 'Call me not Naomi, but Marah; I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' This exposeth to contempt; when the prodigal was poor, his brother was ashamed to own him, Luke xv. 30. 'This thy son;' he said not, this my brother, but this thy son; he scorned to call him brother. When the deer is shot and bleeds, the rest of the herd push it away; when God shoots the arrow of poverty at one, others are ready to push him away. When Terence was grown poor, his friend Scipio cast him off. The muses (Jupiter's daughters) the poets feign, had no suitors, because they wanted a dowry.

(2.) God sometimes afflicts with reproach. Such as have the light of grace shining in them, yet may be eclipsed in their name. The primitive Christians were reproached as if they were guilty of incest, saith Tertullian. Luther was called a trumpeter of rebellion. David calls reproach an heart-breaking, Psal. lxxix. 20. this God lets his dear saints be oft exercised with. Dirt may be cast upon a pearl, those names may be blotted, which are written in the book of life. Sincerity, though it shields from hell, yet not from slander.

(3.) God sometimes afflicts with the loss of dear relations, Ezek. xxiv. 16. 'Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.' This is like pulling away a limb from the body. He takes away an holy child; Jacob's life was bound up in Benjamin, Gen. xlv. 30. and that which puts teeth into the cross, and is worse than the loss of children, is, when they are continued as living crosses; where the parents expected honey, there to have wormwood. What greater cut to a godly parent, than a child who disclaims his father's God; a corrosive applied to the body may do well, but a bad child is a corrosive to the heart. Such an undutiful son had David, who conspired treason, and would not only have taken away his father's crown, but his life.

(4.) God sometimes inflicts with infirmness of body; scarce a well day. Sicknes takes away the comfort of life, and makes one in deaths oft. Thus God tries his people with various afflictions, so that there is need of patience to submit to God's will. He who hath divers bullets shot at him needs armour; when divers afflictions assault, we need patience as armour of proof.

3. God sometimes lets the affliction continue long, Psal. lxxiv. 9. As it is with diseases, there are some chronical, that linger and hang about the body several years together; so it is with affliction, the Lord is pleased to exercise many of his precious ones with chronical affliction, such as lie upon them a

long time : So that in all these cases we need patience and submission of spirit to God's will.

*Use I.* It reproves such as have not yet learned this part of the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done;' they have only said it, but not learned it. If things be not according to their mind, if the wind of providence crosseth the tide of their will, they are discontented and querulous. Where is now submission of will to God? To be displeased with God, if things do not please us, is this to lie at God's feet and acquiesce in his will? This is a very bad temper of Spirit, and God may justly punish us by letting us have our will. Rachel cried out, 'give me children or I die,' Gen. xxx. 1. God let her have a child, but it cost her her life, Gen. xxxv. 8. Israel not content with manna (angel's food) they must have quails to their manna, God punished them by letting them have their will, Numb. xi. 31. 'There went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails.' ver. 33. 'And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and the Lord smote them with a great plague.' They had better been without their quails, than had such sour sauce to them. Many have importunately desired the life of a child, and could not bring their will to God's, to be content to part with it : and the Lord hath punished them by letting them have their will ; the child hath lived and been a burden to them. Seeing their wills crossed God, their child shall cross them.

*Use II. Of exhortation.* Let us be exhorted, whatever troubles God doth exercise us with, *æquo animo ferre*, to resign up our wills to God, and say, 'Thy will be done.' Which is fittest, that God should bring his will to ours, or we bring our will to his? Say, as Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good :' and as David, 2 Sam. xv. 26. 'Behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' It was the saying of Harpukas, *placit mihi quod regi placet* that pleaseth me which pleaseth the king : so should we say, that which pleaseth God pleaseth us, 'Thy will be done.' Some have not yet learned this art of submission to God ; and truly he who wants patience in affliction, is like a soldier in battle who wants armour.

*Qu. When do we not as we ought, submit to God's will in affliction?*

*Ans.* (1.) When we have hard thoughts of God, and our hearts begin to swell against him.

2. When we are so troubled at our present affliction, that we are unfit for duty. We can mourn as doves, but not pray or praise God. We are so discomposed, that we are not fit to

hearken to any good counsel, Exod. vi. 9. ‘ They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.’ Israel was so full of grief under their present burdens, that they minded not what Moses said, though he came with a message from God to them ; ‘ They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.’

3. We do not submit as we ought to God’s will, when we labour to break loose from affliction by indirect means. Many, to rid themselves out of trouble, run themselves into sin ; when God hath bound them with the cords of affliction, they go to the devil to loosen their bands. Better is it to stay in affliction, than to sin ourselves out of affliction. O let us learn to stoop to God’s will in all afflictive providences.

Qu. *But how shall we bring ourselves to this Christian temper in all occurrences of providence, patiently to acquiesce in God’s will, and say, ‘ thy will be done ?’ We know not what trials personal or national we may be exercised with. We seem now to be under the planet Saturn, which hath a malignant aspect. Our ship is steered so strangely, that we are in danger, on one hand, of the sands, on the other hand, of the rocks. If affliction comes, how shall we keep a Christian decorum ? How shall we bear things with equanimity of mind, and say, ‘ thy will be done ?’*

Ans. The means for a quiet resignation to God’s will in affliction are,

1. Judicious consideration, Eccl. vii. 14. ‘ In the day of adversity consider.’ When any thing burdens us, or runs cross to our desires, did we but sit down and consider, and weigh things in the balance of judgment, it would much quiet our minds, and subject our wills to God ; ‘ In the day of adversity consider.’ Consideration would be as David’s harp, to charm down the evil spirit of frowardness and discontent.

Qu. *But what shall we consider ?*

Ans. That which may make us submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ thy will be done,’ is,

1. To consider, that the present state of life is subject to afflictions, as a seaman’s life is subject to storms ; *ferre quam sortem omnes patiuntur nemo recusat* : Job v. 7. ‘ Man is born to trouble ; he is heir apparent to it ; he comes into the world with a cry, and goes out with a groan.’ *Ea lege nati sumus.* The world is a place where much wormwood grows, Lam. iii. 15. ‘ He hath filled me with bitterness,’ Heb. with bitter-nesses ; he hath made me drunk with wormwood. Troubles arise like sparks out of a furnace. Afflictions are some of the thorns which the earth after the curse brings forth. We may as well think to stop the chariot of the sun when it is in swift motion, as put a stop to trouble : the consideration of this, our life is exposed to eclipses and sufferings, should make us say



with patience, 'thy will be done.' Shall a mariner be angry that he meets with a storm at sea?

2. Consideration, God hath a special hand in the disposal of all occurrences that fall out. Job eyed God in the affliction, chap. i. 21. 'The Lord hath taken away.' He doth not complain of the Sabeans, or the influences of the planets; he looked beyond all second causes, he saw God in the affliction, and that made him cheerfully submit, 'blessed be the name of the Lord.' And Christ looked beyond Judas and Pilate, he looked to God's determinate counsel in delivering him up to be crucified, Acts iv. 27. this made him say, Mat. xxvi. 39. 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' It is vain to quarrel with instruments: wicked men are but a rod in God's hand, Isa. x. 5. 'O Assyrian, the rod of my anger.' Whoever brings an affliction, God sends it: the consideration of this would make us say, 'thy will be done;' what God doth, he sees a reason for. We read of a wheel within a wheel, Ezek. i. 15. The outward wheel, which turns all, is providence; the wheel within this wheel, is God's decree; this believed, would rock the heart quiet. Shall we mutiny at that which God doth? We may as well quarrel with the works of creation, as the works of providence.

3. Consideration, which may make us humbly submit to God's will, is, that there is a necessity of affliction, 1 Pet. i. 6. ' (if need be) ye are in heaviness.' It is needful some things be kept in brine: afflictions are needful upon several accounts.

(1.) To keep us humble. Oft-times there is no other way to have the heart low, but by being brought low, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 'When Manasseh was in affliction he humbled himself greatly.' Corrections are corrosives to eat out the proud flesh, Lam. iii. 19. 'Remembering my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul is troubled in me.'

(2.) It is necessary that there should be affliction; for if God did not sometimes bring us into affliction, how could his power be seen in bringing us out? Had not Israel been in the Egyptian-furnace, God had lost his glory in their deliverance.

(3.) If there were no affliction, then many parts of scripture could not be fulfilled. God hath promised to help us to bear affliction, Pl. xxxvii. 24, 39. how could we experience God's supporting us in trouble, if we did not sometimes meet with it? God hath promised to give us joy in affliction, John xvi. 20. how could we taste this honey of joy, if we were not sometimes in affliction? Again, God hath promised to wipe away tears from our eyes, Isa. xxv. 8. how could God wipe away our tears in heaven, if we never shed any? So that, in several respects, there is an absolute necessity that we should meet with

affliction ; and, shall not we quietly submit ? and say, Lord, I see there is a necessity of it ; ‘ thy will be done.’

4. Consideration, to make us submit to God’s will in affliction, is, that whatever we feel, it is nothing but what we have brought upon ourselves ; we put a rod into God’s hand to chastise us. Christian, God lays thy cross on thee, but it is of thy own making. If a man’s field be full of tares, it is nothing but what he hath sown in it : if thou reapest a bitter crop of affliction, it is nothing but what thou thyself hast sown. The cords that pinch thee are of thy own twisting ; *meme adsum que feci*. If children will eat green fruit, they may thank themselves if they are sick ; if we eat the forbidden fruit, no wonder to feel it gripe. Sin is the Trojan horse, that lands an army of afflictions upon us, Jer. iv. 15. ‘ A voice publisheth affliction :’ ver. 18. ‘ Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee ; this is thy wickedness.’ If we by sin run ourselves into arrears with God, no wonder if he set affliction as a serjeant on our back to arrest us. This may make us patiently submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ We have no cause to complain of God, it is nothing but what our sins have merited, Jer. ii. 17. ‘ Hast not thou procured this unto thyself ?’ The cross, though it be of God’s laying, it is of our own making ; say then, as Micah vii. 9. ‘ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.’

5. Consideration, to cause submission to God’s will in affliction, God is now about to make an experiment, he doth it to prove and try us, Ps. lxvi. 10. ‘ Thou, O God hast tried us as silver is tried, thou laidst affliction upon our loins.’ If there were no affliction, how should God have opportunity to try men ? Hypocrites can sail in a pleasure boat, serve God in prosperity ; but when we can keep close to God in times of danger, when we can trust God when we have no pawn, and love God when we have no smile, here is the trial of sincerity ! this may make us say, ‘ thy will be done.’ God is only trying us ; what hurt is in that ? What is the gold worse of being tried ?

6. Consideration, to make us submit to God in affliction, and say, ‘ thy will be done,’ is, that in all our crosses God hath a kindness for us. As there was no night so dark, but Israel had a pillar of fire to give light ; so there is no condition so cloudy, but we may see that which gives light of comfort : David would sing of mercy and judgment, Ps. ci. 1. This may make our wills cheerfully submit to God’s to consider in every path of providence we may see a foot-step of kindness.

Qu. *What kindness is there in affliction, when God seems most unkind ?*

Ans. 1. There is kindness in affliction, in that there is love in it. God’s rod, and God’s love may stand together, Heb.

xii. 6. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth : ' whom he cockereth above the rest ; so Mercer. As Abraham, when he lift up his hand to sacrifice Isaac, loved him ; so when God afflicts his people, and seems to sacrifice their outward comforts, yet he loves them : the husbandman loves his vine, when he cuts it and makes it bleed ; and, shall not we submit to God ? shall we quarrel with that which hath kindness in it, which comes in love ? The chirurgeon binds the patient, and lanceth him, but no wise man will quarrel with the chirurgeon, it is in love, and in order to a cure.

2. There is kindness in affliction, in that God deals with us now as children, Heb. xii. 7. ' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons ; ' God hath one Son without sin, but no son without stripes. Affliction is a badge of adoption ; it is *Dei signillum*, saith Tertullian, it is God's seal by which he marks us for his own. When Munster, that holy man, lay sick, his friends asked him how he did ? He pointed to his sores, saying, *Hæ sunt gemmae Dei*, these are the jewels with which God decks his children. Shall not we then say, ' thy will be done ? ' Lord, there is kindness in the cross, thou usest us as children. The rod of discipline is to fit us for the inheritance.

3. There is kindness, that God hath, in all our afflictions, left us a promise ; in the most cloudy providences, the promise appears as a rain-bow in the cloud.

(1.) Then we shall have God's promise with us, Ps. xci. 15. ' I will be with him in trouble. ' It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is ; I will be with him, *i. e.* to support, sanctify, sweeten ; God's presence is a sweetening ingredient into every affliction. I had rather be in prison, and have God's presence, than be in a palace, and want it.

(2.) Promise, that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13. God will not try us beyond our strength ; either God will make the yoke lighter, or our faith stronger : may not this make us submit our wills to God, when afflictions have so much kindness in them ? In all our trials, God hath left us promises, which are like manna in the wilderness.

4. This is great kindness, that all the troubles that befall us shall be for our profit, Heb. xii. 10. ' He for our profit. '

Qu. *But what profit is in affliction ?*

Ans. 1. Afflictions are disciplinary, they teach us, *Schola crucis*, *Schola lucis*. Many psalms have this inscription : *Majchil*, a psalm giving instruction : affliction may have this inscription upon it, *Majchil*, an affliction giving instruction, Micah vi. 9. ' Hear ye the rod. ' Luther saith, he could never rightly understand some of the psalms, till he was in affliction, Judges viii. 16. ' Gideon took thorns of the wilderness, and briars, and

with them he taught the men of Succoth :’ God by the thorns and briars of affliction teacheth us.

(1.) Affliction shews us more of our own heart than ever. Water in a glass-vial looks clear ; but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up ; when God sets us upon the fire, then we see that corruption boils up which we did not discern before. Sharp, afflictions are to the soul as a soaking rain to the houses, we know not that there are such holes in the house, till the shower comes, and then we see it drop down here and there ; so, we before did not know that there were such unmortified lusts in the soul, till the storm of affliction comes, then we spy unbelief, impatience, carnal fear, we see it drop down in many places. Thus affliction is a sacred *collyrium*, it clears our eye sight ; the rod gives wisdom.

(2.) Affliction brings those sins to remembrance, which before we buried in the grave of forgetfulness. Joseph’s brethren, for twenty years together, were not at all troubled for their sin in selling their brother ; but when they came into Egypt, and began to be in straits, then their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, and their hearts did smite them, Gen. xlii. 21. ‘ They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother.’ When a man is in distress, now his sin comes fresh into his mind ; conscience makes a rehearsal sermon of all the evils which have passed in his life ; now his expence of precious time, his sabbath-breaking, his flighting of the word, come into his remembrance, and he goes out with Peter and weeps bitterly. Thus the rod gives wisdom, it shews the hidden evil of the heart, and brings former sins to remembrance.

2. There is profit in affliction, as it quickens a spirit of prayer, *premuntur iusti ut preffi clament*. Jonah was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale’s belly. Perhaps, in a time of health and prosperity, we prayed in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense, we did scarce mind our own prayers, and how should God mind them ? Now, God sends some cross or other to make us stir up ourselves to take hold of God : when Jacob was in fear of his life by his brother, then he wrestles with God and weeps in prayer, and would not leave God till he blessed him, Hos. xii. 4. It is with many of God’s children, as with those who formerly had the sweating sickness in this land, it was a sleepy disease, if they slept they died ; therefore to keep them waking, they were smitten with rosemary branches ; so, the Lord useth affliction as a rosemary branch to keep us from sleeping, and to awaken a spirit of prayer, Isa. xxvi. 16. ‘ They poured out a prayer, when thy chastening hand was upon them ;’ now their prayer pierced the heavens : in times of trouble we pray feelingly, and we never

pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly ; and, is not this for our profit ?

3. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to expectorate and purge out our sins, Isa. xxvii. 9. ' By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.' Affliction is God's phyfic to expel the noxious humour, it cures the imposthume of pride, the fever of lust ; and, is not this for our profit ? Affliction is God's file to fetch off our rust, his flail to thresh off our husks : the water of affliction is not to drown us, but to wash off our spots.

4. To be under the black rod, is profitable, in that hereby we grow more serious, and are more careful to clear our evidences for heaven : in times of prosperity, when the rock poured out rivers of oil, Job xxix. 6. we were careless in getting, at least clearing our title to glory. Had many no better evidences for their land, than they have for their salvation, they were but in an ill case ; but when an hour of trouble comes, we begin to look after our spiritual evidences, and see how things stand between God and our souls ; and, is it not for our profit to see our interest in Christ more cleared than ever ?

5. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to take us more off from the world ; the world oft proves not only a spider's web, but a cockatrice egg : pernicious worldly things are great enchantments ; they are *retinacula spei*, Tertull. They hinder us in our passage to heaven. If a clock be overwound, it stands still ; so, when the heart is wound up too much to the world, it stands still to heavenly things : Affliction sounds a retreat to call us off the immoderate pursuit of earthly things : when things are frozen and congealed together, the only way to separate them, is by fire ; so, when the heart and the world are congealed together, God hath no better way to separate them than by the fire of affliction.

6. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a refiner ; it works us to further degrees of sanctity, Heb. xii. 10. ' He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The vessels of mercy are the brighter for scouring ; you pour water on your linen when you would whiten it ; God pours the water of affliction upon us, to lay our souls a-whitening. The leaves of the fig-tree and root are bitter, but the fruit is sweet : afflictions are in themselves bitter, but they bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11. ' This may make us submit to God and say, ' Thy will be done ; ' there's kindness in affliction, it is for our spiritual profit.

7. There's kindness in affliction, in that there is no condition so bad, but it might be worse ; when it is duskish it might be darker ; God doth not make our cross so heavy as he might, he doth not stir up all his anger, Pl. lxxviii. 38. He doth

not put so many nails in our yoke, so much wormwood in our cup as he might. Doth God chastise thy body ? He might torture thy conscience. Doth he cut thee short ? He might cut thee off ; the Lord might make our chains heavier. Is it a burning fever ? It might have been the burning lake : Doth God use the pruning knife to lop thee ? he might bring his axe to hew thee down, Ezek. xlvii. 3. ‘ The waters were up to the ancles.’ Do the waters of affliction come up to the ancles ? God might make them rise higher ; nay, he might drown thee in the waters. This may make us submit quietly, and say, ‘ Thy will be done,’ because there is so much kindness in it ; whereas God useth the rod, he might use the scorpion.

8. There is kindness in affliction, in that your case is not so bad as others ; they are always upon the rack, they spend their years with sighing, Pf. xxxi. 10. Have you a gentle fit of the ague ? Others cry out of the stone and strangulation : Do you bear the wrath of men ? Others bear the wrath of God : you have but a single trial, others have them twisted together : God shoots but one arrow at you, he shoots a shower of arrows at others : is there not kindness in all this ? We are apt to say, never any suffered as we : Was it not worse with Lazarus, who was so full of sores, that the dogs took pity on him, and licked his sores ? Nay, was it not worse with Christ, who lived poor, and died cursed ? May not this cause us to say ‘ thy will be done ?’ There is kindness in it, that God deals not so severely with us as with others.

9. There is kindness in affliction, in that (if we belong to God) it is all the hell we shall have. Some have two hells, they suffer in their body and conscience ; here is one hell, and another hell is to come, unquenchable fire. Judas had two hells, but a child of God hath but one hell. Lazarus had all his hell here ; he was full of sores, but had a convoy of angels to carry him to heaven when he died. Say then, Lo, if this be the worst I shall have, if this be all my hell, I will patiently acquiesce. ‘ Thy will be done.’

10. There is kindness, in that God gives gracious supports in affliction ; if he strikes with one hand, he will support with the other, Deut. xxxiii. 27. ‘ Underneath are the everlasting arms.’ There is not the least trial, but if God would desert us, and not assist us with his grace, we should sink under it : the frown of a great man, the fear of reproach ; Peter was frightened at the voice of a maid, Matt. xxvi. 69. O therefore what mercy is it to have Christ strengthen us, and as it were bear the heaviest part of the cross with us. One said, I have no ravishing joys in my sickness, but, I bless God, I have sweet supports : and should not this cause submission to God’s will, and make us say, Lo, if thou art so kind as to bear us up in

affliction, that we do not faint, put us into what wine-press thou pleasest, 'Thy will be done.'

11. There is kindness in affliction, in that it is preventive.

(1.) God by this stroke of his would prevent some sin: 'Paul's thorn in the flesh,' was to prevent his being lifted up in pride, 2 Cor. xii. 7. As affliction is sometimes sent for thy punishing of sin, so sometimes for the preventing of sin. Prosperity exposeth to much evil; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. God's people know not how much they are beholden to their affliction, they might have fallen into some scandal, had not God set an hedge of thorns in their way to stop them: what kindness is this? God lets us fall into sufferings, to prevent falling into snares: say then, Lord, do as it seems good in thy sight, 'Thy will be done.'

(2.) God by affliction would prevent damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 32. 'We are corrected in the world, that we may not be condemned with the world.' A man by falling into the briars, is saved from falling into the river; God lets us fall into the briars of affliction, that we may not drown in perdition. It is a great favour when a lesser punishment is inflicted, to prevent a greater; is it not clemency in the judge, when he lays some light penalty on the prisoner, and saves his life? so, when God lays upon us light affliction, and saves us from wrath to come. As Pilate said, Luke xxiii. 16. 'I will chastise him, and let him go;' so God chastiseth his children, and lets them go, frees them from eternal torment. What is a drop of sorrow, the godly taste, to that sea of wrath the wicked shall be drinking of to all eternity? O what kindness is here; may not this make us say, 'Thy will be done?' It is preventing physic.

12. There is kindness, in that God doth mix his providences, Hab. iii. 2. 'In anger he remembers mercy.' Not all pure gall, but some honey mixed with it. Ather's shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipped in oil, Gen. xxxiii. 24. Affliction is the shoe of brass, but God causeth the foot to be dipped in oil. As the limner mixeth with his dark shadows bright colours; so the wise God mingles the dark and bright colours, crosses and blessings. The body is afflicted, but within is peace of conscience: there is a blessing. Joseph was sold into Egypt, and put in prison: there was the dark side of the cloud. Job lost all that ever he had, his skin was clothed with boils and ulcers; here was a sad providence. But God gave a testimony from heaven of Job's integrity, and did afterwards double his estate, Job xlii. 10. 'The Lord gave Job twice as much;' here was the goodness of God seen towards Job. God doth chequer his works of providence, and shall not we submit

and say, Lord, if thou art so kind, mixing so many bright colours with my dark condition, 'thy will be done.'

13. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth moderate his stroke, Jer. xxx. 11. 'I will correct thee in measure.' God will in the day of his east-wind stay his rough wind, Isa. xxvii. 8. The physician that understands the crasis and temper of the patient will not give too strong physic for the body, nor will he give one drachm or scruple too much : God knows our frame, he will not over-afflict ; he will not stretch the strings of his viol too hard, lest they break. And is there not kindness in all this ? May not this work our hearts to submission ? Lord, if thou usest so much gentleness, and correctest in measure, 'thy will be done.'

14. There is kindness in affliction, in that God often sweetens it with divine consolation, 1 Cor. i. 4. 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.' After a bitter potion, a lump of sugar. God comforts in affliction.

(1.) Partly by his word, Ps. cxix. 50. 'This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' The promises of the word are a shop of cordials.

(2.) God comforts by his Spirit. Philip, landgrave of Hesse, said, that in his troubles, *Se divinas martyrum consolationes sensisse*, he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs. David had his pilgrimage songs, Ps. cxix. 54. and St. Paul his prison songs, Acts xvi. 25. Thus God candies our wormwood with sugar, and makes us gather grapes of thorns. Some of the saints have such ravishing joys in affliction, that they had rather endure their sufferings than want their comforts. O how much kindness is in the cross ! In the belly of the lion is an honey-comb ; may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, when God lines the yoke with comfort, and gives us honey at the end of the rod ?

15. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth curtail and shorten it ; he will not let it lie on too long, Isa. lvii. 16. 'I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before me.' God will give his people a writ of ease, and proclaim a year of jubilee ; the wicked may plow upon the backs of the saints, but God will cut their traces, Ps. cxxix. 4. The goldsmith will not let his gold lie any longer in the furnace than till it be purified. The wicked must drink a sea of wrath, but the godly have only a cup of affliction, Isa. li. 17. and God will say 'Let this cup pass away.' Affliction may be compared to frost, it will break, and spring-flowers will come on, Isa. xxxv. 10. 'Sorrow and sighing shall fly away ; Affliction hath a sting but withal a wing, sorrow and sighing shall fly away ; this land-flood shall be dried up. If then there be so much



kindness in the cross, God will cause a cessation of trouble : say, then *fiat voluntas tua*, 'thy will be done.'

16. *Ult.* 'There is kindness in affliction, in that it is a means to make us happy, Job v. 17. 'Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.' This seems strange to flesh and blood, that affliction should make one happy : when Moses saw the bush burning and not consumed, 'I will (saith he) turn aside and see this strange sight.' Exod. iii. 3. So here is a strange sight, a man afflicted yet happy. The world counts them happy, who can escape affliction, but happy is the man whom God correcteth.

*Qu. But how do afflictions contribute to our happiness ?*

*Ans.* 1. As they are a means to bring us nearer to God ; the loadstone of prosperity doth not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction : when the prodigal was pinched with want, then, saith he, 'I will arise and go to my father,' Luke xv. 18. The deluge brought the dove to the ark : the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ.

2. Afflictions make us happy, as they are maunductions to glory. The storm drives the ship in the harbour : happy is that storm which drives the soul into the heavenly harbour. Is it not better to go through affliction to glory, than through pleasure to misery ? Not that afflictions merit glory : no cross ever merited, but that which Christ endured, but they do *disponere* and prepare us for glory. Think, O Christian, what affliction leads to, it leads to paradise, where are rivers of pleasure always running : may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, and say, Lord, if there be so much kindness in affliction, if all thou dost, is to make us happy, 'thy will be done.'

7. Consideration, it is God's ordinary course, to keep his people to a bitter diet-drink, and exercise them with great trials. Affliction is the beaten road all the saints have gone in : the lively stones in the spiritual building have been all hewn and polished ; Christ's lily hath grown among the thorns, 2 Tim. iii. 12. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' It is too much for a Christian to have two heavens, that is more than Christ had. It hath been ever the lot of the saints to encounter with sore trials ; both of the prophets, James v. 10. 'Take my brethren, the prophets, for an example of suffering affliction ;' And of the apostles ; Peter was crucified with his head downwards, James beheaded by Herod, John banished into the isle of Patmos, the apostle Thomas thrust through with a spear. Matthias (who was chosen apostle in Judas' room) was stoned to death, Luke the evangelist hanged on an olive-tree. Those saints, of whom the world was not worthy, did pass under the rod, Heb. xi. 36.

Christ's kingdom is *regnum crucis*, this is the way God hath always gone in : such as God intends to save from hell, yet he doth not save from the cross. The consideration of this should quiet our minds in affliction, and make us say, 'thy will be done.' Do we think God will alter his course of providence for us? why should we look for exemption from trouble more than others? why should we think to tread only upon roses and violets, when prophets and apostles have marched through the briars to heaven?

8. Consideration, God hath done that for thee, Christian, which may make thee content to suffer any thing at his hand, and say, 'thy will be done.'

(1.) He hath adopted thee for his child, David thought it no small honour to be the king's son-in-law, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. What an honour is it to derive thy pedigree from heaven, to be born of God? why then art thou troubled, and murmurest at every slight cross? As Jonadab said to Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 4. 'Why art thou, being the king's son lean?' So, why art thou, who art son or daughter to the king of heaven, troubled at these petty things? What, the king's son, and look lean! This may quiet thy spirit, and bring thy will to God's; he hath dignified thee with honour, he hath made thee his son and heir, and will entail a kingdom on thee.

(2.) God hath given thee Christ. Christ is *communis thesaurus* a magazine or store-house of all heavenly treasure; a pearl of price to enrich; a tree of life to quicken; he is the quintessence of all blessings: why then art thou discontented at thy worldly crosses? They cannot be so bitter as Christ is sweet. As Seneca said once to Polybius, "Why dost thou complain of hard fortune, *salvo Cæsare*? Is not Cæsar thy friend?" So, is not Christ thy friend? He can never be poor who hath a mine of gold in his field; nor he who hath the unsearchable riches of Christ: say then, Lord, 'thy will be done;' though I have my cross, yet I have Christ with it. The cross may make me weep, but Christ wipes off all tears, Rev. vii. 17.

(3.) God hath given thee grace. Grace is the rich embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost; it is the sacred unction, 1 John ii. 27. The graces are a chain of pearl to adorn, and beds of spices, which make us a sweet odour to God: grace is a distinguishing blessing, Christ gave Judas his purse but not his spirit. May not this quiet the heart in affliction, and make it say, 'thy will be done?' Lord, thou hast given me that jewel which thou bestowest only on the elect: grace is a seal of thy love, it is both food and cordial, it is an earnest of glory.

9. Consideration. When God intends the greatest mercy to any of his people, he brings them low in affliction. God seems to go quite cross to sense and reason; when he intends to raise

us highest, he brings us lowest. As Moses' hand, before it wrought miracles, was leprous; and Sarah's womb before it brought forth the son of the promise, was barren; God brings us low before he raiseth us, as water is at the lowest ebb before there is a spring tide.

(1.) It is true in a temporal sense. When God would bring Israel to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, he first leads them through a sea and a wilderness. When God intended to advance Joseph to be the second man in the kingdom, he cast him first into prison, and the iron entered into his soul, Ps. cv. 18. God usually lets it be darkest before the morning-star of deliverance appears.

(2.) It is true in a spiritual sense. When God intends to raise a soul to spiritual comfort, he first lays it low in desertion, Isa. xii. 1. As the limner lays his dark colour first, and then lays his gold colour on it; so God first lays the soul in the dark of desertion, and then he lays his golden colour of joy and consolation. May not this make us cheerfully submit, and say, 'Thy will be done?' Perhaps now God afflicts me, he is about to raise me, he intends me a greater mercy than I am aware of.

10. Consideration, the excellency of this frame of soul, to lie at God's feet, and say, 'Thy will be done.'

(1.) A soul that is melted into God's will shews variety of grace. As the holy ointment was made up of several aromatic spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, Exod. xxx. 23. so this sweet temper of soul, submission to God's will in affliction, hath in it a mixture of several graces: in particular, it is compounded of three graces, faith, love, humility. 1. Faith: faith believes God doth all in mercy, that affliction is to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; that God corrects in love and faithfulness, Ps. cxix. 75. The belief of this causeth submission of will to God. 2. Love: love thinks no evil, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Love takes all God doth in the best sense, it hath good thoughts of God; this causeth submission, 'Thy will be done.' Let the righteous God smite me (saith love) it shall be kindness yea, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. 3. Humility: the humble soul looks on its sins, and how it hath provoked God; he saith not his afflictions are great, but his sins are great; this makes him lie at God's feet, and say, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' Micah vii. 9. Thus a submissive frame of heart is full of grace, it is compounded of several graces; it pleaseth God to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised; he saith of such a Christian, as David of Goliath's sword, 1 Sam. xxi. 9. 'None like that, give it me.'

(2.) He who puts his *fiat* & *placet* to God's will, and saith, 'Thy will be done,' shews not only variety of grace, but strength

of grace. It argues much strength in the body, to be able to endure hard weather, yet not to be altered by it ; so to endure hard trials, yet not faint or fret, shews more than ordinary strength of grace. You that can say, you have brought your wills to God's ; God's will and yours agree, as the copy and the original ; let me assure you, you have outstript many Christians, who perhaps shine in an higher orb of knowledge than you. To be content to be at God's disposal, to be any thing that God will have us, shews a noble heroic soul. It is reported of the eagle, it is not like other fowls ; they, when they are hungry, make a noise, the ravens cry for food, but the eagle is never heard to make a noise, though it wants meat, and it is from the nobleness and greatness of its spirit ; the eagle is above other fowls, and hath a spirit suitable to its nature ; so it is an argument of an holy gallantry and magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever crosses providences befall a Christian, he doth not cry and whine as others, but is silent, and lies quietly at God's feet : here is much strength of grace in such a soul, nay, the height of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to say, ' Lord, thy will be done ; ' but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses and trials, now to say, ' Thy will be done, ' is a glorious thing indeed, and prepares for the garland of honour.

11. Consideration, persons are usually better in adversity than in prosperity, therefore stoop to God's will. A prosperous condition is not always so safe : it is true, it is more pleasing to the palate, and every one desires to get on the warm side of the hedge, where the sun of prosperity shines, but it is not always best ; in a prosperous estate, there is more burden : many look at the shining and glittering of prosperity, but not at the burden, *plus oneris*.

(1.) The burden of care, therefore Christ calls riches, ' cares, ' Luke viii. 14. A rose hath its prickles, so have riches ; we think them happy that flourish in their silks and cloth of gold, but we see not the troubles and cares that attend them. A shoe may have silver lace on it, yet pinch the foot. Many a man that goes to his day-labour, lives a more contented life than he that hath his thousands *per annum*. Disquieting care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man : when his chests are full of gold, his heart is full of care how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten : he is sometimes full of care whom he shall leave it to. A large estate, like a long trailing garment, is oft more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous estate there is the burden of account. Such as are in high places, have a far greater account to give to God than others, Luke xii. 48. ' Unto whomsoever much is given, of

him much shall be required.' The more golden talents any are entrusted with, the more they have to answer for; the more their revenues, the more their reckonings. God will say, I gave you a great estate, what have you done with it? how have you employed it for my glory? I have read of Philip king of Spain, when he was to die, he said. "O that I had never been a king! O that I had lived a private solitary life! Here is all the fruit of my kingdom it hath made my accounts heavier." So then, may not this quiet our hearts in a low averse condition, and make us say, 'Lord, thy will be done?' as thou hast given me a less portion of worldly things, so I have a less burden of care, and a less burden of account.

3. A prosperous condition hath *plus periculi*, more danger in it. Such as are on the top of the pinnacle of honour, are in more danger of falling, they are subject to many temptations; their table is oft a snare. Heliogabalus made ponds of sweet water to bathe in; millions are drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure. A great sail overturns the vessel; how many, by having too great sails of prosperity, have had their souls overturned? It must be a strong head that bears heady wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace that knows how to bear an high condition. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Agur feared, if he were full, he would deny God and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Prov. xxx. 9. Prosperity breeds, 1. Pride: the children of Korah were in an higher estate than the rest of the Levites, they were employed in the tabernacle about the most holy things of all, Numb. iv. 4. they had the first lot, Josh. xxi. 10. but as they were lifted up above others of the Levites in honour, so in pride, Numb. xvi. 3. In the Thames, when the tide riseth higher, the boat riseth higher; so, when the tide of an estate riseth higher, many men's hearts rise higher in pride, 2. Prosperity breeds security. Samson fell asleep in Dalilah's lap, so do men in the lap of ease and plenty: the world's golden sands are quick-sands. 'How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?' Luke xviii. 24. The consideration of this should make us submit to God in adversity, and say, 'thy will be done.' God sees what is best for us; if we have less estate, we are in less danger; if we want the honour of others, so we want their temptations.

12. Consideration, the having of our wills melted into God's, is a good sign that the present affliction is sanctified: then an affliction is sanctified, when it attains the end for which it was sent. The end why God sends affliction, is to calm the spirit, to subdue the will, and bring it to God's will, when this is done, affliction hath attained the end for which it came; it is sancti-

fied, and it will not be long ere it be removed. When the fore is healed, the smarting plaister is taken off.

13. Consideration, how unworthy it is of a Christian to be froward and unsubmissive, and not bring his will to God's.

(1.) It is below the spirit of a Christian. The spirit of a Christian is dove-like, it is meek and sedate, willing to be at God's disposal; 'Not my will, but thy will be done,' Luke xxii. 42. A Christian spirit is not fretful, but humble; not craving, but contented. See the picture of a Christian spirit in St. Paul, Phil. iv. 12. 'I know how to be abased, and how to abound.' Paul could be either higher or lower, as God saw good; he could sail with any wind of providence, either a prosperous or boisterous gale, his will was melted into God's will: now to be of a cross spirit, that cannot submit to God, is unworthy of the spirit of a Christian; it is like the bird, that, because he is pent up in the cage, and cannot fly in the open air, beats himself against the cage.

(2.) A froward unsubmissive frame, that cannot submit to God's will, is unworthy of a Christian's profession: he professeth to live by faith, yet repines at his condition, 'Faith lives not by bread alone,' it feeds on promises, it makes future glory present; faith sees all in God; 'When the fig tree doth not blossom, faith can joy in the God of its salvation,' Hab. iii. 17. Now, to be troubled at the present estate, because low and mean, where is faith? Sure that is a weak faith, or no faith, which must have crutches to support it. O be ashamed to call thyself believer, if thou canst not trust God and acquiesce in his will, in the deficiency of outward comforts.

(3.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, that cannot surrender its will unto God, is unworthy of the high dignities God hath put upon a Christian. 1. He is a rich heir; he is exalted above all creatures that ever God made, except the angels; yea, in some sense, as his nature is joined in an hypostatical union to the divine nature, so he is above the angels: O then, how is it below his dignity, for want of a few earthly comforts, to be froward, and ready to quarrel with the Deity? is it not unworthy of a king's son, because he may not pluck such a flower, to be discontented and rebel against his royal father? 2. A Christian is espoused to Jesus Christ: what, to be married to Christ, yet froward and unsubmissive? hast not thou enough in him? as Elkanah said to Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 8. 'Am not I better than ten sons?' is not Christ better than a thousand worldly comforts? *Omnia bona in summo bono*. It is a disparagement to Christ, that his spouse should be froward, when she is matched into the crown of heaven.

(4.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, is unsuitable to the prayers of a Christian; he prays, 'thy will be done:' it is

the will of God he should meet with such troubles, whether sickness, loss of estate, crosses in children, God hath decreed, and ordered it; why then is there not submission? why are we discontented at that which we pray for? It is a saying of Latimer, speaking of Peter, who denied his master, Peter, saith he, forgot his prayer, for that was, 'hallowed be thy name.' So, oft we forget our prayers, nay, contradict them; for we pray, 'thy will be done.' Now, if unsubmitivenes to God be so unworthy of a Christian, should not we labour to bring our wills to God's, and say, Lord, let me not disparage religion, let me do nothing unworthy of a Christian.

14. Consideration, frowardness and unsubmitivenes of will to God, is very sinful.

(1.) It is sinful in its nature; to murmur when God crosseth us in our will, shews much ungodliness. The apostle Jude speaks of ungodly ones, ver. 15. and that we may better know who these are, he sets a mark upon them, ver. 16. 'These are murmurers.' Some think they are not so ungodly as others, because they do not swear, nor get drunk, but you may be ungodly in murmuring; there are not only ungodly drunkards, but ungodly murmurers: nay, this is the height of ungodliness, namely, rebellion. Korah and his company murmured against God, and see how the Lord interprets this, Numb. xvii. 10. 'Bring Aaron's rod to be kept for a token against the rebels;' to be a murmurer and a rebel, is, in God's account, all one; Numb. xx. 13. 'This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord.' How did they strive with God, because they murmured at his providence, ver. 3. What! wilt thou be a rebel against God? It is a shame for a servant to strive with his master, but what is it for a creature to strive with its maker.

(2.) To quarrel with God's providence, and be unsubmitive to his will, is sinful in the spring and cause; it ariseth from pride. It was Satan's temptation, 'ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. A proud person makes a god of himself, he disdains to have his will crossed; he thinks himself better than others, therefore he finds fault with God's wisdom, that he is not above others.

(3.) Quarrellomenes and unsubmitivenes to God's will, is sinful in the concomitants of it. 1. It is joined with sinful risings of the heart. (1.) Evil thoughts arise. We think hardly of God, as if he had done us wrong, or, as if we had deserved better at his hands. (2.) Passions begin to arise; the heart secretly frets against God. Jonah was crossed in his will, and passion began to boil in him, Jonah iv. 1. 'He was very angry.' Jonah's spirit, as well as the sea, wrought, and was tempestuous. 1. Unsubmitivenes of will is joined with unthankfulness,

because in some one thing we are afflicted, we forget all the mercies we have ; we deal with God, just as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet ; the prophet Elijah had been a means to keep her alive in the famine, but as soon as her child dies, she quarrels with the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 18. ‘ O thou man of God, art thou come to slay my son ? ’ So do we deal with God ; we can be content to receive blessings at his hand, but as soon as he doth, in the least thing, cross us in our will, we grow touchy, and are ready in a passion to fly out against him : thus God loseth all his mercies, and is not this high ingratitude ?

(4.) Frowardness and unsubmitiveness to God’s will, is evil in the effects. 1. It unfits for duty : it is bad sailing in a storm, and it is ill praying when the heart is stormy and unquiet : it is well if such prayers do not suffer shipwreck. (2.) Unsubmitiveness of spirit, sometimes unfits for the use of reason. Jonah was discontented, because he had not his will ; God withered the gourd, and his heart fretted against God ; and in the midst of his passion, he spake no better than nonsense and blasphemy, Jonah iv. 9. ‘ I do well to be angry to the death.’ Sure he did not know well what he said : what ! to be angry with God, and die for anger ? He speaks as if he had lost the use of his reason. Thus unsubmitiveness of will is sinful in its nature, causes, concomitants, effects ; may not this martyr our wills, and bring our wills to God in every thing, making us say, ‘ thy will be done.’

15. Consideration, unsubmitiveness to God’s will is very imprudent, we get nothing by it, it doth not ease us of our burden, but rather makes it heavier. The more the child struggles with the parent, the more it is beaten : when we struggle with God, and will not submit to his will, we get nothing but more blows. Instead of having the cords of affliction loosened, we make God tie them the straiter. Let us then submit, and say, ‘ Lord, thy will be done.’ Why should I spin out my own trouble by impatience, and make my cross heavier ? What got Israel by their frowardness, they were within eleven days journey of Canaan, they fell a murmuring, and God leads them a march of forty years longer in the wilderness.

16. Consideration, the mischief of being unsubmitive to God’s will in affliction, it lays a man open to many temptations. When the heart frets against God by discontent, here’s good fishing for Satan in these troubled waters. He usually puts discontented persons upon indirect means. Job’s wife fretted (so far was she from holy submission) and she presently puts her husband upon cursing of God, Job ii. 9. ‘ Curse God and die.’ What is the reason why some have turned witches, and given themselves to the devil, but out of envy and discontent, because they have not



had their will. Others being under a temptation of poverty, and and not having their wills in living at such an high rate as others, have laid violent hands upon themselves. O the temptations that men of discontented spirits are exposed to ! Here (saith Satan) is good fishing for me.

17. Consideration how far unsubmitiveness of spirit is from that temper of soul which God requires in affliction. God would have us in patience possess our souls, Luke xxi. 19. The Greek word for patience, signifies to bear up under a burden without fainting or fretting ; but to be froward in affliction, and quarrel with God's will, where is this Christian patience ? God would have us rejoice in affliction, James i. 2. ' Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; ' that is, afflictions, count it joy, be as birds that sing in winter, 1 Thess. i. 6. ' Ye received the word in affliction with joy.' Paul could leap in his fetters, and sing in the stocks, Acts xvi. 25. How far is a discontented soul from this frame ; he is far from rejoicing in affliction that hath not learned to submit.

18. Consideration, what is it makes the difference between a godly man and an ungodly man in affliction, but only this, the godly man submits to God's will, the ungodly man will not submit : a wicked man frets and fumes, and is like a wild bull in a net. He in affliction blasphemeth God, Rev. xvi. 9. ' Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.' Put a stone in the fire, and it flies in your face ; stony hearts fly in God's face. A stuff that is rotten, the more it is rubbed, the more it frets and tears. When God afflicts the sinner, he tears himself in anger ; but a godly man is sweetly submissive to God's will : this is his speech, ' Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me ? ' Spices, when they are bruised, send out a sweet fragrant smell ; when God bruise his saints, they send out the sweet perfume of patience. Servulus, an holy man, long afflicted with the palsy, yet this was his ordinary speech, *laudetur Deus*, let God be praised ; O let us say, ' Thy will be done ; ' let us bear that patiently which God inflicts justly, else how do we shew our grace ? What difference is there between us and the wicked in affliction ?

19. Consideration, not to submit to God's providential will, is highly provoking to God. Can we anger God more than by quarrelling with him, and not let him have his will ? Kings do not love to have their will opposed, though they may be unjust ; how ill doth God take it, when we will be disputing against his righteous will ? It is a sin God cannot bear, Numb. xiv. 26, 27. ' How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me ? ' May not God justly say thus, how long shall I bear with this wicked person, who, when any thing falls out cross, murmurs against me ? Ver. 28. ' Say

unto them, as truly as I live faith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you.' God swears against a murmurer, 'as I live;' and what will God do as he lived? Ver. 29. 'Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness.' You see how provoking a discontented quarrellsome spirit is to God, it may cost men their lives, nay, their soul. God sent fiery serpents among the people for their murmuring, 1 Cor. x. 10. He may send worse than fiery serpents, he may send hell-fire.

20. Consideration, how much doth God bear it at our hand, and shall not we be content to bear something at his hand? It would tire the patience of angels to bear with us one day, 2 Pet. iii. 9. 'The Lord is long-suffering towards us.' How oft do we offend in our eye by envious impure glances? in our tongues by rash censuring? but God passeth by many injuries, he bears with us. Should the Lord punish us every time we offend, he might draw his sword every day, shall God bear so much at our hands, and can we bear with nothing at his hands? shall God be patient with us, and we impatient with him? Shall he be meek, and we murmur? Shall he endure our sins, and shall not we endure his strokes? O let us say 'Thy will be done.' Lord, thou hast been the greatest sufferer, thou hast born more from me, than I can from thee.

21. Consideration, submitting our wills to God in affliction disappoints Satan of his hope, and quite spoils his design. The devil's end is in all our afflictions to make us sin. The reason why Satan did smite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind, and put him into a passion; he hoped that Job would have been discontented, and in a fit of anger, not only have cursed his birth-day, but curse his God. But Job lying at God's feet, and blessing him in affliction, disappointed Satan of his hope, and quite spoiled his plot. Had Job murmured he had pleased Satan; had he fallen into an heat, and sparks of his anger flown about, the devil had warmed himself at this fire of Job's passion; but Job quietly submitted and blessed God; here Satan's design was frustrated, and he missed of his intent. The devil hath oft deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by quiet submission to God in all things, saying 'thy will be done.'

22. Consideration, it may rock our hearts quiet in affliction, to consider, that to the godly the nature of affliction is quite changed; to a wicked man it is a curse, the rod is turned into a serpent; affliction to him is but an effect of God's displeasure, the beginning of sorrow: but the nature of affliction is quite changed to a believer, it is by divine chymistry turned into a blessing; it is like poison corrected, which becomes a medicine; it is a love token, a badge of adoption, a preparatory to glory; should not this make us say, 'thy will be done?'

The poison of the afflicted is gone ; it is not hurtful but healing. This hath made the saints not only patient in affliction, but have sounded forth thankfulness : as bells, when they have been cast in the fire, do afterwards make a sweeter sound ; so the godly, after they have been cast into the fire of affliction, have sounded forth God's praise, Pl. cxix. 71. ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Job i. 21. ' Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

23. Consideration, to make us submit our will to God in affliction, is, to think how many good things we receive from God, and shall not we be content to receive some evil? Job ii. 10. ' Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil.' In the Hebrew, shall we receive good from God, and not evil. This may make us say, ' thy will be done.' How many blessings have we received at the hand of God's bounty? We have been bemiracled with mercy ; what sparing, preventing, delivering mercy have we had ! the honey-comb of mercy hath continually dropped upon us, Lam. iii. 23. ' His mercies are new every morning.' Mercy comes in as constantly as the tide ; nay, how many tides of mercies do we see in one day? We never feed, but mercy carves every bit to us ; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy ; we never go abroad, but mercy sets a guard of angels about us ; we never lie down in our bed, but mercy draws the curtains of protection close about us ; now, shall we receive so many good things at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil? our mercies far outweigh our afflictions ; for one affliction we receive a thousand mercies ; O then let us submit to God, and say, ' thy will be done ;' the sea of God's mercy should swallow up a few drops of affliction.

24. Consideration, to bring our wills to God in affliction doth much honour the gospel : an unsubmitive Christian reproacheth religion, as if it were not able to subdue an unruly spirit ; it is weak physic, which cannot purge out ill humours ; and sure it is a weak gospel, if it cannot master our discontent, and martyr our wills ; unsubmitiveness is a reproach, but a cheerful resignation of our will to God sets a crown of honour upon the head of religion, it shews the power of the gospel, which can charn down the passions, and melt the will into God's will : therefore in scripture submissive patience is brought in as an adorning grace, Rev. xiv. 12. ' Here is the patience of the saints.'

25. Consideration, the example of our Lord Jesus ; how flexible and submissive was he to his Father ! he who taught us this prayer, ' thy will be done,' had learned it himself ; Christ's will was perfectly turned to his Father's will ; it was the will of his Father that he should die for our sins, and he ' endured the

cross,' Heb. xiii. 2. 'It was a painful, shameful, cursed death;' he suffered the very pains of hell equivalently, yet he willingly submitted, Isa. liii. 7. 'He opened not his mouth,' he opened his sides when the blood ran out, but he opened not his mouth in repining, his will was resolved into the will of his Father, John xviii. 11. 'Shall not I drink the cup which my Father hath given me?' Now the more our wills are subject to God's will in affliction, the nearer we come to Christ our pattern; is it not our prayer we may be like Christ? by holy submission we imitate him; his will was melted into his Father's will.

26. Consideration to submit our wills to God is the way to have our will; every one would be glad to have his will; the way to have our will is to resign it; God deals with us as we do with froward children; while we fret and quarrel God will give us nothing, but when we are submissive and say, 'Thy will be done,' now God carves out mercy to us: the way to have our will is to submit it. David brought his will to God, 2 Sam. xv. 26. 'Here am I, let him do to me as seems good to him.' And after he resigned his will he had his will; God brought him back to the ark, and settled him again in his throne, 2 Sam. xix. Many a parent that hath had a dear child sick, when he could bring his will to God to part with it, God hath given him the life of his child; there's nothing lost by referring our will to God, the Lord takes it kindly from us, and it is the only way to have our will.

27. and *ult.* Consideration, we may the more cheerfully surrender our souls to God when we die, when we have surrendered our wills to God while we live. Our blessed Saviour had all along submitted his will to God, there was but one will between God the Father and Christ. Now Christ in his life-time having given up his will to his Father, at death he cheerfully gives up his soul to him, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' You that resign up your wills to God, may at the hour of death comfortably bequeath your souls to him.

II. The second means to bring our will to God in affliction is, study the will of God.

(1.) It is a sovereign will, he hath a supreme right and dominion over his creatures, to dispose of them as he pleaseth; a man may do with his own as he lists, Matth. xx. 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?' A man may cut his own timber as he will. God's sovereignty may cause submission, he may do with us as he sees good; God is not accountable to any creature for what he doth, Job xxxiii. 13. 'He giveth not account of any of his matters.' Who shall call God to account? Who is higher than the Highest? Eccl. v. 8. What man or angel dare summon God to his bar? 'He giveth

not account of any of his matters.' God will take an account of our carriage towards him, but he will give no account of his carriage towards us : God hath an absolute jurisdiction over us ; the remembrance of this, God's will is a sovereign will, to do with us what he pleases, may silence all discontents, and charm down all unruly passions ; we are not to dispute but to submit.

(2.) God's will is a wise will, he knows what is conducing to the good of his people, therefore submit, Isa. xxx. 18. ' The Lord is a God of judgment,' that is, he is able to judge what is best for us ; therefore rest in his wisdom, and acquiesce in his will ; we rest in the wisdom of a physician, we are content he should scarify and let us blood, because he is judicious, and knows what is most conducive to our health : if the pilot be skilful, the passenger saith, ' let him alone, he knows best how to steer the ship ;' and shall we not rest in God's wisdom ? Did we but study how wisely God steers all occurrences, and how often he brings us to heaven by a cross wind, it would much quiet our spirits, and make us say, ' Thy will be done.' God's will is guided by wisdom ; should God sometimes let us have our will, we would undo ourselves ; did he let us carve for ourselves, we would choose the worst piece : Lot chose Sodom because it was well watered, and was as the garden of the Lord, Gen. xiii. 10. but God rained fire upon it out of heaven, Gen. xix. 24.

(3.) God's will is a just will, Gen. xviii. 25. ' Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?' God's will is *regula et mensura*, it is the rule of justice ; the wills of men are corrupt, therefore unfit to give law ; but God's will is an holy and unerring will, which may cause submission, Psal. xcvi. 2. God may cross, but he cannot wrong us ; severe he may be, not unjust ; therefore we must strike sail, and say, ' Thy will be done.'

(4.) God's will is a good and gracious will, it promotes our interest : if it be God's will to afflict us, he shall make us say at last, it was good for us that we were afflicted. God's flail shall only thresh off our husks. That which is against our will shall not be against our profit ; study what a good will God's is, and we will say, *fiat voluntas*, ' Thy will be done.'

(5.) God's will is an irresistible will ; we may oppose it, but we cannot hinder it ; the rising of the wave cannot stop the ship when it is in full sail ; so the rising up of our will against God cannot stop the execution of his will, Rom. ix. 19. ' Who hath resisted his will ?' Who can stay the chariot of the sun in its full career ? Who can hinder the progress of God's will ? Therefore it is in vain to contest with God, his will shall take place ; there is no way to overcome God, but by lying at his feet.

3. Means to submission to God in affliction is, get a gracious heart ; all the rules and helps in the world will do but little

good, till grace be infused ; the bowl must have a good bias, or it will not run according to our desire ; so till God put a new bias of grace into the soul, which inclines the will, it never submits to God ; grace renews the will, and it must be renewed before it be subdued : grace teacheth self denial, and we can never submit our will till we deny it.

4. Means, let us labour to have our covenant-interest cleared, to know that God is our God, Psal. xlviii. 14. ‘ This God is our God.’ He whose faith doth flourish in assurance, that can say, God is his, will say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ A wicked man may say, God hath laid this affliction upon me, and I cannot help it : but a believer faith, my God hath done it, and I will submit to it. He who can call God his, knows God loves him as he loves Christ, and designs his salvation ; therefore he will, with St. Paul, take pleasure in reproaches, 2 Cor. xii. 10. and in every adverse providence yield to God, as the wax to the impression of the seal.

5. Mean to submission to God in affliction, get an humble spirit : a proud man will never stoop to God, he will rather break than bend ; but when the heart is humble, the will is pliable. What a vast difference was there between Pharaoh and Eli ? Pharaoh cries out, ‘ Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice ?’ Exod. v. 2. But Eli faith, ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight,’ 1 Sam. iii. 18. See the difference between an heart that is swelled with pride, and that which is ballasted with humility ; Pharaoh faith, ‘ Who is the Lord ?’ Eli, ‘ It is the Lord.’ An humble soul hath a deep sense of sin, he sees how he hath provoked God, he wonders he is not in hell ; therefore, whatever God inflicteth, he knows it is less than his iniquities deserve ; this makes him say, ‘ Lord, thy will be done.’ O get into an humble posture, the will is never flexible till the heart be humble.

6. Means, get your heart loosened from things below ; be crucified to the world : whence is children’s frowardness, but when you take away their play-things ? When we love the world, and God takes away these things from us, then we grow froward and unsubmitive to God’s will. Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd ; and when God smote it, he grew froward, and because God had killed his gourd, kill me too, faith he, Jonah iv. 8. He who is a lover of the world, can never pray this prayer heartily, ‘ thy will be done ;’ his heart boils with anger against God : and when the world is gone, his patience is gone too. Get mortified affections to these sublunary things.

7. Means for submission to God’s will, get some good persuasion your sin is pardoned ; *feri, Domine, feri, quia peccata mea, condonata sunt* : smite, Lord, smite where thou wilt, said Luther, because my sins are pardoned ; pardon of sin is a crown-

ing blessing; hath God forgiven my sin, I will bear any thing, I will not murmur, but admire; I will not complain of the burden of affliction, but bless God for removing the burden of sin: the pardoned soul saith this prayer heartily, 'Thy will be done.' Lord, use thy pruning-knife, so long as thou wilt not come with thy bloody axe to hew me down.

8. Means, if we would have our wills submit to God, let us not look so much on the dark side of the cloud as the light side; that is, let us not look so much on the smart of affliction, as the good of affliction; it is bad to pore all on the smart, as it is bad for sore eyes to look too much on the fire; but we should look on the good of affliction; Samson did not only look on the lion's carcase, but on the honey-comb within it, Judg. xix. 8. 'He turned to see the carcase of the lion, and behold, there was honey in the carcase.' Affliction is the frightful lion, but see what honey there is in it: affliction humbles, purifies, fills us with the consolations of God; here is honey in the belly of the lion; could we but look upon the benefit of affliction, stubbornness would be turned into submissiveness, and we should say, 'thy will be done.'

9. Means, pray to God that he would calm our spirits, and conquer our wills. It is no easy thing to submit to God in affliction, there will be risings of the heart; therefore let us pray, that what God inflicts righteously, we may bear patiently. Prayer is the best spell or charm against impatience; prayer doth to the heart as Christ did to the sea, when it was tempestuous, he rebuked the wind, and there was a great calm; so, when the passions are up, and the will is apt to mutiny against God, prayer makes a gracious calm in the soul: Prayer doth to the heart as the sponge doth to the cannon, when hot, cools it.

10. Means, if we would submit to God's will in affliction, let us make a good interpretation of God's dealings, take all God doth in the best sense, we are apt to misconstrue God's dealings, and put a bad interpretation upon them, as Israel, Numb. xx. 4. 'Ye have brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die there.' So God hath brought this affliction upon us, because he hates us, and intends to destroy us; and such hard thoughts of God cause sullenness and stubbornness: O let us make a fair and candid interpretation of providence. Doth God afflict us? Say thus, perhaps he intends us mercy in this; he will try us whether we will love him in afflictions; he is about to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; he smites the body, that he may save the soul. Could we put such a good meaning upon God's dealings, we should say, 'thy will be done; let the righteous God smite me,

and it shall be a kindness, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head, Psal. cxli. 5.

11. and *ult.* Means, if you would submit to God in affliction, believe that the present condition is best for you. We are not competent judges; we fancy it is best to have ease and plenty, and have the rock pour out rivers of oil; but God sees affliction best; he sees our souls thrive best upon the bare common; the fall of the leaf is the best spring of our grace. Could we believe the present condition is best, which God carves out to us, the quarrel would soon be at an end, and we should sit down satisfied with what God doth, and say, 'thy will be done.' So much for this third petition.



## OF THE FOURTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

IN this petition there are two things observable, I. The order. II. The matter.

I. The order. First we pray, 'hallowed be thy name,' before, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Hence we learn, Doct. 'That the glory of God ought to be preferred before our own personal concerns.'

First we pray, 'hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' before we pray 'give us this day our daily bread.' God's glory ought to weigh down all before it; it must be preferred before our dearest concerns: Christ preferred his Father's glory before his own glory as he was man, John viii. 49, 50. 'I honour my Father, I seek not my own glory.' God's glory is that which is most dear to him; it is the apple of his eye; all his riches lie here. As Micah said, Judges xviii. 24. 'What have I more?' So I may say of God's glory, what hath he more? God's glory is the most orient pearl of his crown, which he will not part with, Isa. xlii. 8. 'My glory will I not give to another.' God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all men's souls; better kingdoms be demolished, better men and angels be annihilated, than God lose any part of his glory. First we pray that God's name may be hallowed and glorified before we pray, 'give us our daily bread.' We are to prefer God's glory before our nearest concerns: before there can be a preferring God's glory before our private concerns, there must be a new birth wrought, the natural man seeks his own secular interest before God's glory,



John iii. 31. 'He is of the earth, earthly.' Let him have peace and trading, let the rock pour out rivers of oil, Job xxix. 6. and let God's glory go which way it will, he minds it not. A worm cannot fly and sing as a lark: a natural man, whose heart creeps upon the earth, cannot admire God, or advance his glory, as a man elevated by grace doth.

*Uſe.* Of trial. Do we prefer God's glory before our private concerns? Doth God's glory take place? *Minus te amat qui aliquid tecum amat, quod non propter te amat*, Aug. 1. Do we prefer God's glory before our own credit? *Fama pari paſſu ambulat cum vita*. Credit is a jewel highly valued; like precious ointment, it caſts a fragrant ſmell: but God's glory muſt be dearer than credit and applauſe: we muſt be willing to have our credit trampled upon, if God's glory may be raiſed higher, Acts v. 41. 'The apoſtles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name;' that they were graced ſo far as to be diſgraced for Chriſt. 2. Do we prefer God's glory before our relations? Relations are dear, they are of our own fleſh and bone: but God's glory muſt be dearer, Luke xiv. 46. 'If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he cannot be my diſciple.' Here, *odium in ſuos*, is *pietas in Deum*. 'If my friends (ſaith Jerom) ſhould perſuade me to deny Chriſt, if my wife ſhould hang about my neck, if my mother ſhould ſhew me her breſts that gave me ſuck, I would trample upon all, and flee to Chriſt.' 3. We muſt prefer God's glory before eſtate: gold is but ſhining duſt, God's glory muſt weigh heavier. If it comes to this, I cannot keep my place of profit, but God's glory will be eclipsed; here I muſt rather ſuffer in my eſtate, than God's glory ſhould ſuffer, Heb. x. 34. 4. We muſt prefer God's glory before our life, Rev. xii. 11. 'They loved not their own lives to the death.' Ignatius called his fetters his ſpiritual jewels, he wore them as a chain of pearl. Gordius the martyr ſaid, it is to my loſs, if you bate me any thing of my ſufferings. This argues grace creſcent, and elevated in an high degree. Who but a ſoul inflamed in love to God, can ſet God higheſt on the throne, and prefer him above all private concerns?

II. The ſecond thing in the petition, is the matter of it. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' The ſum of this petition is, that God would give us ſuch a competency in theſe outward things, as he ſees moſt expedient for us: It is much like that prayer of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Feed me with food convenient for me:' give me a *viaticum*, a bait by the way, enough to bear my charges till I come to heaven, and it ſufficeth. Let me explain the words, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' [Give] Hence note, that the good things of this life are the gifts of God: he is the donor of all our bleſſings, 'Give us:' not only

faith, but food is the gift of God ; not only daily grace, is from God, ‘ but daily bread ;’ every good thing comes from God, James i. 17. ‘ Every good gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.’ Wisdom is the gift of God, Isa. xxviii. 26. ‘ His God doth instruct him to discretion.’ Riches are the gift of God, 2 Chron. i. 12. ‘ I will give thee riches.’ Peace is the gift of God, Pf. cxlvii. 14. ‘ He makes peace in thy borders.’ Health, which is the cream of life, is the gift of God, Jer. xxx. 17. ‘ I will restore health to thee.’ Rain is the gift of God, Job v. 10. ‘ Who giveth rain on the earth,’ All comes from God ; he makes the corn to grow, and the herbs to flourish.

*Use 1.* See our own poverty and indigence : we live all upon alms, and upon free gift, ‘ give us this day.’ All we have is from the hand of God’s royal bounty ; we have nothing but what God gives us out of his storehouse ; we cannot have one bit of bread but from God. The devil persuaded our first parents, that, by disobeying God, they should ‘ be as gods,’ Gen. v. 3. but we may now see what goodly gods we are, that we have not a bit of bread to put in our mouth, unless God give it us : here is an humbling consideration.

*Branch 2.* Is all a gift ? Then we are to seek every mercy from God by prayer, ‘ Give us this day.’ The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. Whatever we have, if it do not come in the way of prayer, it doth not come in the way of love ; it is given, as Israel’s quails, in anger. If every thing be a gift, we do not deserve it, we are not fit for it, unless we ask for this alms. And must we go to God for every mercy ? How wicked are they, who instead of going to God for food when they want, they go to the devil, they make a compact with him ; and if he will help them to a livelihood, they will give him their souls ? Better to starve than go to the devil for provender. I wish there be none in our age guilty of this, who, when they are in want, use indirect means for a livelihood ; they consult with witches, who are the devil’s oracles ; the end of these will be fearful, as that of Saul was, whom the Lord is said to have killed, because he asked counsel at a familiar spirit.

3. If all be a gift, then it is not a debt, we cannot say to God, as that creditor said, Mat. xviii. 28. ‘ Pay me what thou owest.’ Who can make God a debtor, or do any act that is obliging and meritorious ? Whatever we receive from God is a gift ; we can give nothing to God but what he hath given to us, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. ‘ All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.’ David and his people offered to the building of God’s house gold and silver, but they offered nothing but what God had given them, ‘ of thine own have we given

thee.' If we love God, God it is that hath given us an heart to love him : if we praise him, he both gives us the organ of the tongue, and puts it in tune : if we give alms to others, God hath given alms to us first, so that we may say, ' we offer, O Lord, of thine own to thee.' Is all of gift, how absurd then is the doctrine of merit ? That was a proud speech of a friar, that said, *redde mihi Vitam Aeternam quam debes* ; give me, Lord, eternal life, which thou owest me. We cannot deserve a bit of bread, much less a crown of glory. If all be a gift, then merit is exploded, and shut out of doors.

4. If all be a gift, ' give us this day,' then take notice of God's goodness : there is nothing in us can deserve or requite God's kindness ; yet such is the sweetness of his nature, he gives us rich provision, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. Pindar saith, it was an opinion of the people of Rhodes, that Jupiter rained down gold upon the city. God hath rained down golden mercies upon us ; he is upon the giving hand. Observe three things in God's giving ;

(1.) He is not weary of giving ; the springs of mercy are ever running. God did not only dispense blessings in former ages, but he still gives gifts to us ; as the sun not only enriches the world with its morning-light, but keeps light for the meridian. The honey-comb of God's bounty is still dropping.

(2.) God delights in giving, Micah vii. 18. ' He delighteth in mercy.' As the mother delights to give the child the breast, God loves we should have the breast of mercy in our mouth.

(3.) God gives to his very enemies. Who will send in provisions to his enemy ? Men use to spread nets for their enemies, God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose ; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst. Those who have their mouths opened against God, yet God puts bread in those mouths. O the royal bounty of God ! Ps. li. 1. ' The goodness of God endureth continually.' Swinish sinners God put jewels upon, and feeds them every day.

5. If all be a gift, see then the odious ingratitude of men, who sin against their giver. God feeds them, and they fight against him ; he gives them their bread, and they give him affronts. How unworthy is this ? Would we not cry shame of him, who had a friend always feeding him with money, and he should betray and injure that friend. Thus ungratefully do sinners deal with God, they do not only forget his mercies, but abate them, Jer. v. 7. ' When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery.' O how horrid is this, to sin against a bountiful God ! To strike (as it were) those hands that relieve us ! this gives a die and tincture to men's sins, and makes them crimson. How many make a dart of God's mercies, and shoot

at him? he gives them wit, and they serve the devil with it; he gives them strength, and they waste it among harlots; he gives them bread to eat, and they lift up the heel against him, Deut. xxxii. 15. ‘Jeshuran waxed fat and kicked.’ These are like Absalom, who as soon as David his father kissed him, plotted treason against him, 2 Sam. xv. 10. Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk. Those who sin against their giver, and abuse God’s royal favours, the mercies of God will come in as witnesses against them. What smoother than oil? but if it be heated, what more scalding? What sweeter than mercy? but if it be abused what more dreadful? It turns to fury.

6. If God gives us all, let God’s giving excite us to thanksgiving; he is the founder and donor of all our blessings, let him have all our acknowledgments. ‘All the rivers come from the sea. And thither they return again,’ Eccl. i. 7. All our gifts come from God, and to him must all our praises return. We are apt to ‘burn incense to our own drag,’ Hab. i. 16. To attribute all we have to our own second causes.

(1.) Our own skill and industry. God is the giver: he gives daily bread, Ps. cxxxvi. 35. he gives riches, Deut. viii. 18. ‘He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.’

Or, (2.) We oft ascribe the praise to second causes, and forget God. If friends have bestowed an estate to look at them and admire them, but not God who is the great giver; as if one should be thankful to the steward, and never take notice of the master of the family that provides all. O if God gives all, our eye-sight, our food, our clothing, let us sacrifice the chief praise to him; let not God be a loser by his mercies. Praise is a more illustrious part of God’s worship. Our wants may send us to prayer, nature may make us beg daily bread; but it shews an heart full of ingenuity and grace, to be rendering praises to God. In petition we act like men, in praise we act like angels. Doth God sow seeds of mercy? Let thankfulness be the crop we bring forth. We are called the temples of God, 1 Cor. iii. 16. and where should God’s praises be founded forth, but in his temples? Ps. cxlvi. 2. ‘While I live will I bless the Lord, I will sing praises to my God while I have any being.’ God gives us daily bread; let us give him daily praise. Thankfulness to our donor is the best policy; there is nothing lost by it; to be thankful for one mercy is the way to have more. Musicians love to sound their trumpets where there is the best echo, and God loves to bestow his mercies where there is the best echo of praise; and it is not only offering the calves of our lips is enough, but we must shew our thankfulness by improving the gifts which God gives us, and as it were putting them out to use. God gives us an estate, and we honour the

Lord with our substance, Prov. iii. 9. He gives us the staff of bread, and we lay out the strength we receive by it in his service ; this is to be thankful ; and that we may be thankful, be humble. Pride stops the current of gratitude : a proud man will never be thankful ; he looks upon all he hath, either to be of his own procuring or deserving. Let us see all we have is God's gift, and how unworthy we are to receive the least favour : and this will make us much in doxology and gratitude, we will be silver trumpets sounding forth God's praise.

First, *Give*, Hence I note, 1. That the good things of this life are the gifts of God : he is the founder and donor. 2. From this word give, I note, that it is not unlawful to pray for temporal things ; we may pray for daily bread, Prov. xxx. 8. ' Feed me with food convenient for me ; ' we may pray for health, Ps. vi. 2. ' O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed.' As these are in themselves good things, so they are useful for us ; they are as needful for preserving the comfort of life, as the oil is needful for preserving the lamp from going out. Only let me insert two things.

1. There is a great difference between our praying for temporal things and spiritual. In praying for spiritual things, we must be absolute : when we pray for pardon of sin, and the favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, these are indispensibly necessary to salvation, and here we must take no denial : but when we pray for temporal things, here our prayers must be limited, we must pray conditionally so far as God sees them good for us ; God sometimes sees cause to withhold temporal things from us : they may be snares, and draw our hearts from God, therefore we must pray for these things with submission to God's will. This was Israel's sin ; they would be peremptory and absolute in their desire of temporal things : God's bill of fare did not please them, they must have dainties, Numb. xi. 18. ' Who shall give us flesh to eat ? ' God hath given them manna, he fed them with a miracle from heaven, but their wanton palates craved more, they must have quails ; God let them have their desire, but they had sour sauce to their quails, Ps. lxxviii. 31. ' While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them.' Rachel was importunate in her desires for a child, Gen. xxx. 1. ' Give me children or I die : ' God let her have a child, but it was a *Benoni*, a son of sorrow, it cost her her life in bringing forth, Gen. xxxv. 18. We must pray for outward things with submission to God's will, else they come in anger.

2. When we pray for things pertaining to this life, we must desire temporal things for spiritual ends ; we must desire these things to be as helps in our journey to heaven. If we pray for health, it must be that we may improve this talent of health,

for God's glory, and may be fitter for his service : if we pray for a competency of estate, it must be for an holy end, that we may be kept from the temptations which poverty usually exposeth to, and that we may be in a better capacity to sow the golden seeds of charity, and relieve such as are in want. Temporal things must be prayed for, for spiritual ends. Hannah prayed for a child, but it was for this end, that her child might be devoted to God, 1 Sam. i. 11. ' O Lord, if thou wilt-remember me, and wilt give unto thine hand-maid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.' Many pray for outward things only to gratify their sensual appetite ; ' the ravens cry for food,' Ps. cxlvii. 9. To pray for outward things only to satisfy nature, is to cry rather like ravens than Christians. We must have an higher end in our prayers, we must aim at heaven, while we are praying for earth. And must we pray for temporal things for spiritual ends, that we may be fitter to serve God ? Then, how wicked are they, who beg temporal mercies that they may be more enabled to sin against God, James iv. 3. ' Ye ask, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' One man is sick, and he prays for health, that he may be among his cups and harlots ; another prays for an estate ; he would not only have his belly filled, but his barns ; and why would he be rich, that he may raise his name, or that, having more power in his hand, he may now take a fuller revenge on his enemies ? This is impiety joined with imprudence ; to pray to God to give us temporal things, that we may be the better enabled to serve the devil.

*U/e.* If we are to pray for temporal good things, then how much more for spiritual ? If we are to pray for bread, then, how much more for the bread of life ? if for oil, then, how much more for the oil of gladness ? If we pray to have our hunger satisfied, much more should we pray to have our souls saved. Alas ! what if God should hear our prayers, and grant us these temporal things, and no more, what were we the better ? What is it to have food, and want grace ? What is it to have the back clothed and the soul naked ; to have a south land, and want the living springs in Christ's blood ; what comfort could that be ? O therefore let us be earnest for spiritual mercies ; Lord, do not only feed me, but sanctify me ; rather an heart full of grace, than an house full of gold : if we are to pray for daily bread, the things of this life, much more for the things of the life that is to come.

3. From this word *give*, I note, that they whom God hath given a large measure of outward things to, yet must pray, ' Give us daily bread.' And this may answer a question.

*Qa.* Some may say, we have an estate already, and what need we pray, ' Give us daily bread ?'

*Ans.* Supposing we have a plentiful estate, yet we need make this petition, 'Give us bread;' and that upon a double account,

(1.) That we may have a blessing upon our food, and all that we enjoy, Pl. cxxxii. 5. 'I will bless her provision. Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of God's mouth.' Matth. iv. 4. What is that but a word of blessing? Though the bread is in our hand, yet the blessing is in God's hand, and it must be fetched out of his hand by prayer: Well therefore may rich men pray, 'Give us our bread,' let it be seasoned with a blessing. If God should withhold a blessing, nothing we have would do us good; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, Pl. cvi. 15. 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul;' that is, they pined away, and their meat did not nourish them. If God should withhold a blessing, what we eat would turn to bad humours, and hasten death. If God do not bless our riches, they will do us more hurt than good, Eccl. v. 13. 'Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' So that, granting we have plentiful estates, yet we had need pray, 'Give us our bread;' let us have a blessing with what we have.

(2.) Though we have estates, yet we had need pray, *give*, that we may hereby engage God to continue these comforts to us. How many casualties may fall out? How many may have had corn in their barn, and a fire hath come on a sudden and consumed all? How many have had losses at sea, and great estates boiled away to nothing? Ruth i. 21. 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' Therefore, though we have estates, yet we had need pray, 'give us,' Lord, give a continuance of these comforts, that they may not, before we are aware, take wings and fly from us. So much for this first word in the petition, *give*.

Secondly, *us*, 'Give us.'

*Qu.* Why do we pray here in the plural? Why 'Give us?' Why is it not said, give me?

*Ans.* To shew that we are to have public spirits in prayer; we must not only pray for ourselves, but others: both the law of God, and the law of love bind us to this, 'we must love our neighbour as ourselves;' therefore we must pray for them as well as ourselves. Every good Christian hath a fellow-feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and he prays God would extend his bounty to them, especially, he prays for the saints, Eph. vi. 18. 'Praying always for all saints.' These are the children of the family.

*Use* I. Should we have public spirits in prayer, 'give us?' It reproves such narrow-spirited men as move only within their own sphere; they look only at themselves, but mind not the

case of others ; they leave others out of their prayers ; if they have daily bread, they care not though others starve ; if they are clothed, they care not though others go naked. Christ hath taught us to pray for others, ‘ give us : ’ but selfish persons are shut up within themselves, as the snail in the shell, and never speak a word in prayer for others : these have no commiseration or pity ; they are like Judas, whose bowels fell out.

*Use II.* Let us pray for others, as well as for ourselves, ‘ give us : ’ *vir bonus aliis prodest æquæ ac sibi.* Spiders work only for themselves, but bees work for the good of others ; the more excellent any thing is, the more it operates for the good of others. The springs refresh others with their crystal streams ; the sun enlightens others with its golden beams : the more a Christian is ennobled with grace, the more he besiegeth heaven with his prayers for others ; if we are members of the body mystical, we cannot but have a sympathy with others in their wants, and this sympathy sets us a praying for them. David had a public spirit in prayer, Ps. cxxv. 4. ‘ Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good : ’ though he begins the psalm with prayer for himself, Ps. li. 1. ‘ Have mercy upon me, O God ; ’ yet he ends the psalm with prayer for others, ver. 18. ‘ Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.’

*Use III.* It is matter of comfort to the godly, who are but low in the world, yet they have the prayers of God’s people for them ; they pray not only for the increase of their faith, but their food, that God will give them ‘ daily bread.’ He is like to be rich, who hath several flocks going ; so they are in a likely way to thrive, who have the prayers of the saints going for them in several parts of the world. So much for this second word in the petition, ‘ Give us.’

*Thirdly,* The third word in the petition is, ‘ This day.’ We pray not, Give us bread for a month, or a year, but a day ; ‘ Give us this day.’

*Qu.* *It is not lawful to lay up for afterwards? Doth not the apostle say, He who provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel,* 1 Tim. v. 8.

*Ans.* It is true, it is lawful to lay up for posterity ; but our Saviour hath taught us to pray, ‘ Give us this day our bread,’ for two reasons ;

(1.) That we should not have carking care for the future. We should not set our wits upon the tentor, or torment ourselves how to lay up great estates ; if we do *vivere in diem*, if we have but enough to supply for the present, it may suffice ; ‘ Give us this day : ’ take no thought for to-morrow, Matt. vi. 34. God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, and he fed them from hand to mouth : sometimes all their manna was spent ; and if any one had asked them where they would have



their breakfast next morning, they would have said, our care is only for this day, God will rain down what manna we need : if we have bread this day do not distrust God's providence for the future.

(2.) Our Saviour will have us pray, ' Give us bread this day,' to teach us to live every day as if it were our last. We are not to pray, give us bread to-morrow, because we do not know whether we shall live while to-morrow : but, Lord, ' give us this day ;' it may be our last day we shall live, and then we shall need no more.

*Use.* If we pray for bread only for a day, ' Give us this day,' then you who have great estates have cause to be thankful : you have more than you pray for : you pray but for bread for one day, and God hath given you enough to suffice you all your life. What a bountiful God do you serve ! Two things may make rich men thankful ; 1. God gives them more than they deserve. 2. God gives them more than they pray for.

*Fourthly,* The fourth thing in the petition is, ' Our bread.'

*Qu.* Why is it called, ' Our bread,' when it is not ours, but God's ?

*Ans.* 1. We must understand it in a qualified sense : it is our bread, being gotten by honest industry. There are two sorts of bread that cannot properly be called our bread. (1.) The bread of idleness. (2.) The bread of violence.

(1.) The bread of idleness, Prov. xxxi. 27. ' She eateth not the bread of idleness.' An idle person doth *vivere aliena quadra*, he lives at another body's cost, and is at their finding, Prov. i. 25. ' His hands refuse to labour.' We must not be as the drones which eat the honey that other bees have brought into the hive : if we eat the bread of idleness, this is not our own bread, 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. ' There are some that walk disorderly, working not at all ; such we command that they work, and eat their own bread.' The apostle gives this hint, that such as live idly do not eat their own bread.

(2.) The bread of violence. We cannot call this ' our bread,' for it is taken away from others : that which is gotten by stealth or fraud, or any manner of extortion, is not ' our bread,' it belongs to another. He who is a bird of prey, who takes away the bread of the widow and fatherless, he eats that bread which is none of his, nor can he pray for a blessing upon it : can he pray God to bless that which he hath gotten unjustly ?

2. It is called our bread, by virtue of our title to it. There is a twofold title to bread. (1.) A spiritual title : in and by Christ we have a right to the creature, and may call it ' our bread.' As we are believers, we have the best title to earthly things, we hold all *in capite*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. ' All things are yours ;' by what title, ' ye are Christ's.' (2.) A civil title,

which the law confers on us : to deny men a civil right to their possessions, and make all common, it opens the door to anarchy and confusion.

*Use.* See the privilege of believers, they have both a spiritual and a civil right to what they possess : they who can say, ‘ our Father,’ can say ‘ our bread.’ Wicked men, though they have a legal right to what they possess, yet not a covenant-right ; they have it by providence, not by promise ; with God’s leave, not with his love. Wicked men are in God’s eye no better than usurpers ; all they have, their money and land, is like cloth taken up at the drapers, which is not paid for ; but this is the sweet privilege of believers, they can say, ‘ our bread ;’ Christ being theirs, all is theirs. O how sweet is every bit of bread dipped in Christ’s blood ! How well doth that meat relish, which is a pledge and earnest of more ! The meal in the barrel is an earnest of our angels food in paradise. Here is the privilege of saints, they have a right to the earth and heaven.

*Fifthly,* The fifth and last thing in this petition is, the thing we pray for ‘ daily bread.’

*Qu.* What is meant by bread ?

*Ans.* Bread here, by a *synecdoche*, *speciei pro genere*, is put for all the temporal blessings of this life, food, fuel, clothing. *Quicquid nobis conducit ad bene esse*, *Austin*. Whatever may serve for necessity or sober delight.

*Use.* Learn to be contented with that allowance God gives us. If we have bread, a competency of these outward things, let us rest satisfied. We pray but for bread, ‘ Give us our daily bread ;’ we do not pray for superfluities, not for quails or venison, but for bread, that which may support life. Though we have not so much as others, so full a crop, so rich an estate, yet if we have the staff of bread to shore us from falling, let us be content. Most people are herein faulty : though they pray that God would give them bread (so much as he sees expedient for them) yet they are not content with God’s allowance, but overgreedily covet more, and with the daughters of the horse-leech, cry, ‘ Give, give,’ *Prov. xxx. 15*. This is a vice naturally ingrafted in us. Many pray Agur’s first prayer, ‘ give me not poverty,’ but few pray his last prayer, ‘ give me not riches,’ *Prov. xxx. 8*. They are not content with ‘ daily bread,’ but have the dry drop of covetousness ; they are still craving for more, *Hab. ii. 5*. ‘ Who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied. There are (saith Solomon) four things say it is not enough, *Prov. xxx. 15*. the grave, the barren womb, the earth, the fire ;’ and I may add a fifth thing, the heart of a covetous man. Such as are not content with daily bread, but thirst insatiably after more, will break over the hedge of God’s command ; and to get riches will stick at no sin.

*Cui nihil satis est, eidem nihil turpe*, Tacitus. Therefore covetousness is called a radical vice, 1 Tim. vi. 10. 'The root of all evils.' *Quid non mortalia pectora cogit auri sacra fames?* The Greek word for covetousness *pleonexia*, signifies an inordinate desire of getting. Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately: this is a key opens the door to all sin. It causeth, 1. Theft; Achan's covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold which cleft asunder his soul from God, Josh. vii. 21. (2.) It causeth treason. What made Judas betray Christ? It was the thirty pieces of silver, Mat. xxvi. 5. (3.) It produceth murder. It was the inordinate love of the vineyard made Ahab conspire Naboth's death, 1 Kings xxi. 13. (4.) It is the root of perjury, 2 Tim. iii. 3. Men shall be covetous; and it follows, truce-breakers. Love of silver will make men take a false oath, and break a just oath. (5.) It is the spring of apostacy, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.' He did not only forsake Paul's company, but his doctrine. Demas afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. (6.) Covetousness will make men idolaters, Col. iii. 5. 'Covetousness which is idolatry.' Though the covetous man will not worship graven images in the church, yet he will worship the graven image in his coin. (7.) Covetousness makes men give themselves to the devil. Pope Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom. Covetous persons forget this prayer. 'Give us daily bread,' that which may satisfy nature, but they are insatiable in their desire. O let us take heed of this dry-dropsey, Heb. xiii. 5. Be content with such things as ye have.' *Natura parva dimittitur*, Senec. That we may be content with 'daily bread,' that which God in his providence carves out to us, and not covet or murmur; let me propose these things,

1. God can bless a little, Exod. xxiii. 24. 'He will bless thy bread and thy water.' A blessing puts sweetness into the least morsel of bread, it is like sugar in wine, Psal. cxxii. 15. 'I will bless her provision.' Daniel, and the three children, ate pulse, (which was a coarse fare,) yet they looked fairer than those who did eat of the king's meat, Dan. i. 15. Whence was this? God did infuse a more than an ordinary blessing into the pulse: God's blessing was better than the king's venison: a piece of bread with God's love is angel's food.

2. God, who gives us our allowance, knows what quantity of these outward things is fittest for us: a smaller provision may be fitter for some; bread may be better than dainties; every one cannot bear an high condition, no more than a weak brain can bear heady wine. Hath one a larger proportion of worldly things? God sees he can better manage such a condition; he

can order his affairs with discretion, which perhaps another cannot ; as he hath a large estate, so he hath a large heart to do good, which perhaps another hath not ; this should make us content with a shorter bill of fare : God's wisdom is what we must acquiesce in, he sees what is best for every one : that which is good for one, may be bad for another.

3. In being content with daily bread, that which God carves for us, though it be a lesser piece, much grace is seen in this ; all the graces act their part in a contented soul. As the holy ointment was made up of several spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, Exod. xxx. 23. So contentment hath in it a mixture of several graces ; there is faith, a Christian believes God doth all for the best ; and love, which thinks no evil, but takes all God doth in good part ; and patience, submitting cheerfully to what God orders wisely : God is much pleased to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised, like so many bright stars shining in a constellation.

4. To be content with daily bread, the allowance God gives, though but sparingly, doth keep us from many temptations, which discontented persons fall into ; when the devil sees a person just of Israel's humour, not content with manna, but must have quails, saith Satan, here is good fishing for me. Satan oft tempts discontented ones to murmuring, and to unlawful means, cozening and defrauding ; and he who increaseth an estate by indirect means, stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die : if you would be freed from the temptations which discontent exposeth to, be content with such things as ye have, bless God for ' daily bread.'

5. What a rare and admirable thing is it to be content with ' daily bread,' though it be coarse, and though there be but little of it ! a Christian though he hath but a *viaticum*, a little meal in the barrel, yet he hath that which gives him content ; what he hath not in the cupboard, he hath in the promise : that bit of bread he hath, is with the love of God, and that sauce makes a relish sweet, that little oil in the cruse is a pledge and earnest of those dainties he shall taste of in the kingdom of God, this makes him content : What a rare and wonderful thing is this ! It is no wonder to be content in heaven, when we are at the fountain-head, and have all things we can desire ; but to be content when God keeps us to short commons, and we have scarce ' daily bread,' this is a wonder : when grace is crowning, it is no wonder to be content ; but when grace is conflicting with straits, now to be content is a glorious thing indeed, and deserves the garland of praise.

6. To make us content with ' daily bread,' though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger that is in an high prosperous condition : some are not content with

'daily bread,' but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; this proves a snare to them, 1 Tim. vi. 10. 'They that will be rich fall into a snare.' Pride, idleness, wantonness, are the three worms that usually breed of plenty. Prosperity oft deafens the ear against God, Jer. xxii. 21. 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear.' Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat, the less blood in the veins, and the less spirits; the more outward plenty, often the less piety. Prosperity hath its honey, and also its sting: prosperity, like the full of the moon, makes many lunatic. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. Anxious care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man, and will not let him be quiet: when his chests are full of money, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth. Should not this make us content with what allowance God gives, if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity: the spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare; many have been sunk to hell with golden weights. The ferry-man takes in all passengers, that he may increase his fare, and sometimes to the sinking of his boat, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'They that would be rich fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown them in perdition.' The world's golden sands are quick-sands; this may make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly: what if we have less food, we have less snare; if less dignity, less danger: as we want the rich provisions of the world, so we want the temptations.

7. If God keeps us to a spare diet, if he gives us less temporals, he hath made it up in spirituals; he hath given us the pearl of price, and the holy anointing. (1.) The pearl of price, the Lord Jesus, he is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. God can make more worlds, but he hath no more Christs to bestow: he is such a golden mine, that the angels cannot dig to the bottom, Eph. iii. 8. From Christ we may have justification, adoption, coronation. The sea of God's mercy in giving us Christ (saith Luther) should swallow up all our wants. (2.) The holy unction; God hath anointed us with the graces of his Spirit. Grace is a seed of God, a blossom of eternity; the graces are the impressions of the divine nature, stars to enlighten us, spices to perfume us, diamonds to enrich us; and if God hath adorned the hidden man of the heart with these sacred jewels, it may well make us content, though we have but most commons, and that coarse too. God hath given his people better things than corn and wine; he hath given them that which he cannot give in anger, and which cannot stand with reprobation.

tion; and they may say as David, Psal. xvi. 6. 'The lines are fallen to them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage.' I have read of Didimus and Anthony, Didimus was a blind man, but very holy; Anthony asked him, if he was not troubled for the want of his eyes, he told him he was: why (saith Anthony) are you troubled, you want that which flies and birds have, when you have that which angels have? So I say to Christians, if God hath not given you the purse, he hath given you his Spirit; if you want that which rich men have, God hath given you that which angels have, and are you not content?

8. If you have but daily bread enough to suffice nature, be content. Consider it is not having abundance makes the life always comfortable; it is not a great cage will make the bird sing: a competency may breed contentment, when having more may make one less content: a staff may help the traveller, but a bundle of staves will be a burden to him. A great estate may be like a long trailing garment, more burdensome than useful. Many that have great incomes and revenues have not so much comfort in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour.

9. If you have less daily bread, you will have less account to give. The riches and honours of this world, like Alchymy, make a great shew, and, with their glistering, dazzle mens' eyes: but they do not consider the great account they must give to God, Luke xvi. 2. 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' What good hast thou done with thy estate? Hast thou, as a good steward, traded with thy golden talents for God's glory? hast thou honoured the Lord with thy substance? The greater revenues the greater reckonings: This may quiet and content us, if we have but little daily bread, our account will be less.

10. You that have but a small competency in these outward things, your provisions are short, yet you may be content to consider how much you look for hereafter: God keeps the best wine till last. What though now you have a small pittance, and are fed from hand to mouth? you look for an eternal reward, white robes, sparkling crowns, rivers of pleasure. A son is content tho' his father give him but now and then a little money, as long as he expects his father should settle all his land upon him at last: if God give you but a little at present, yet you look for that glory which eye hath not seen; may not you be content? The world is but a *diversorium*, a great inn: if God give you sufficient to pay for your charges in your inn, you may be content, you shall have enough when you come to your own country.

Qu. *How may we be content, though God cut us short in these externals; though we have but little daily bread and coarse?*

*Ans.* 1. Think with ourselves, some have been much lower than we, who have been better than we. Jacob, an holy patriarch, goes over Jordan with his staff, and lived in a mean condition a long time; he had the clouds for his canopy, and stone for his pillow. Moses, that might have been rich, some historians say, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him for her son, because king Pharaoh had no heir, and so Moses was like to have come to the crown, yet leaving the honour of the court, in what a low mean condition did he live in, when he went to Jethro his father-in-law? Musculus, famous for learning and piety, was put to great straits, he was put to dig in a town ditch, and had scarce daily bread, yet content. Nay, Christ, who was heir of all, yet, for our sakes, became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Let all these examples make us content.

2. Let us labour to have the interest cleared between God and our souls. He who can say, 'My God hath enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition: what can he want who hath *El-Shaddai*, the all-sufficient God for his portion? Though the nether-springs fail, yet he hath the upper-springs: though the bill of fare grow short, yet an interest in God is a pillar of support to us, and we may, with David, encourage ourselves in the Lord our God.



## OF THE FIFTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

BEFORE I speak strictly of the words, I shall take notice,  
1. That in this prayer there is but one petition for the body, 'Give us our daily bread,' but two petitions for the soul, 'Forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:' Hence observe, that we are to be more careful for our souls, than for our bodies: more careful for grace than for daily bread; more desirous to have our souls saved, than our bodies fed. In the law, the weight of the sanctuary was twice as big as the common weight, to typify that spiritual things must be of far greater weight with us than earthly. The excellency of the soul may challenge our chief care about it.

1. The soul is an immaterial substance; it is an heavenly spark, lighted by the breath of God. It is the more refined spiritual part of man, it is of an evangelical nature; it hath some faint resemblance of God. The body is the more dreggish part, it is but the cabinet, which though curiously wrought,

the soul is the jewel ; the soul is near a-kin to angels, it is *capax beatitudinis* capable of communion with God in glory.

2. It is immortal ; it doth never expire. It can act without the body ; though the body dissolve into dust, the soul lives, Luke xii. 4. The essence of the soul is eternal, it hath a beginning, but no end ; it is a blossom of eternity. Sure, then, if the soul be so ennobled and dignified, more care should be taken about the soul than the body. We make but one petition for the body, but two petitions for the soul.

*Uſe. 1.* It reproves them that take more care for their bodies, than their souls. The body is but the brutish part, yet they take more care, 1. About dressing their bodies, than their souls. They put on their best clothes, are dressed in their richest garb, but care not how naked or undressed their souls are ; they do not get the jewels of grace to adorn their inner man. 2. About feeding their bodies, than their souls, they are caterers for the flesh, they do make provision for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. they have the best diet, but let their souls starve ; as if one should feed his hawk, but let his child starve. The body must sit in the chair of state, but the soul, that princely thing, is made a lackey to run on the devil's errand.

*Uſe. 2.* Let us be more careful for our souls, — *omnia ſi perdas animam ſervare memento.* If it be well with the soul, it shall be well with the body. If the soul be gracious, the body shall be glorious, for it shall shine like Christ's body. Therefore it is wisdom to look chiefly to the soul, because in saving the soul, we secure the happiness of the body. And we cannot shew our care for the body more than in taking all seasons for our souls ; reading, praying, hearing, meditating. O look to the main chance, let the soul be chiefly tended ; the loss of the soul would be fatal ; other losses may be made up again. If one loseth his health, he may recover it again ; if he lose his estate, he may get it up again : but if he lose his soul, this loss can never be made up again. The merchant that ventures all he hath in one ship, if that that ship be lost, he is quite broken.

2. From the connection in the text, as soon as Christ hath said give us 'daily bread,' he adds, 'and forgive us.' Christ joins this petition of forgiveness of sin, immediately to the other of daily bread, to shew us, that though we have daily bread, yet all is nothing without forgiveness. If our sins be not pardoned, we can take but little comfort in our food. As it is with a man that is condemned, though you bring him meat in prison, yet he takes little comfort in it without a pardon ; so, though we have daily bread, yet it will do us no good unless sin be forgiven. What though we should have manna, which was called angel's food, though the rock should pour out rivers of oil, Job xxix. 6. all is nothing unless sin be done away.



When Christ had said, 'Give us our daily bread,' he presently adds, and 'forgive us our trespasses.' Daily bread may satisfy the appetite, but forgiveness of sin satisfies the conscience.

*Use.* 1. It condemns the folly of most people: if they have daily bread, the delicious things of this life, they look no further, they are not solicitous for the pardon of sin; if they have that which feeds them, they look not after that which should crown them. Alas! you may have daily bread, and yet perish. The rich man in the gospel had daily bread, nay, he had dainties, he fared 'deliciously every day, but in hell he lift up his eyes,' Luke xvi. 19.

*Use.* 2. Let us pray, that God would not give us our portion in this life, that he would not put us off with daily bread, but that he would give forgiveness. This is the sauce that would make our bread relish the sweeter. A speech of Luther *valde protestatus sum me nolle se satiare ab illo*. I did solemnly protest, that God should not put me off with outward things. Be not content with that which is common to the brute creatures, the dog or elephant, to have your hunger satisfied: but, besides daily bread, get pardon of sin. A drop of Christ's blood, a dram of forgiving mercy, is infinitely more valuable than all the delights under the sun. Daily bread may make us live comfortably, but forgiveness of sin will make us die comfortably. So I come to the words of the petition, 'forgive us our debts.' &c.

1. Here is a term given to sin, it is a debt. 2. The confessing the debt, 'our debt.' 3. A prayer, 'forgive us.' 4. A condition on which we desire forgiveness, 'as we forgive our debtors.'

I shall speak of the term given to sin, it is a debt. That which is here called a debt is called sin, Luke xi. 4. 'Forgive us our sins.' So then sin is a debt, and every sinner is a debtor. Sin is compared to a debt of ten thousand talents, Matth. xviii. 24.

1. Why is sin called a debt? 2. Wherein sin is worse than other debts we contract? 3. Wherein sinners have the property of bad debtors?

*Qu.* 1. *Why is sin called a debt?*

*Ans.* Because it so fitly resembles it.

1. A debt ariseth from non-payment of money, or the not paying that which is one's due. So we owe to God exact obedience, and not paying what is due, thus we come to be in debt. 2. As in case of non-payment, the debtor goes to prison; so, by our sin, we become guilty, and stand obliged to God's curse of damnation. Though God doth a while grant a sinner a reprieve, yet he stands bound to eternal death, if the debt be not forgiven.

2. *In what sense sin is the worst debt ?*

*Ans.* 1. Because we have nothing to pay ; if we could pay the debt, what need we pray, ‘ forgive us ?’ We cannot say, as he in the gospel, ‘ have patience with me, and I will pay thee all ;’ we can neither pay principle nor interest. Adam made us all bankrupts ; in innocency, Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, he could give God personal and perfect obedience ; but, by his sin, he is quite broken, and hath beggared all his posterity. We have nothing to pay, all our duties are mixed with sin, and so we cannot pay God in current coin.

2. Sin is the worst debt, because it is against an infinite majesty. An offence against the person of a king, is *crimen læsæ majestatis*, it doth enhance and aggravate the crime. Sin wrongs God, and so it is an infinite offence. The schoolmen say, *omne peccatum contra conscientiam est quasi Deicidium*, i. e. Every known sin strikes at the Godhead. The sinner would not only unthrone God, but ungod him, this makes the debt infinite.

3. Sin is the worst debt, because it is not a single, but a multiplied debt : forgive us ‘ our debts ;’ we have debt upon debt, Psal. xl. 12. ‘ Innumerable evils have compassed me about.’ We may as well reckon all the drops in the sea, as reckon all our spiritual debts ; we cannot tell how much we owe. A man may know his other debts, but we cannot number our spiritual debts. Every vain thought is a sin, Prov. xxiv. 9. ‘ The thought of foolishness is sin.’ And what swarms of vain thoughts have we ? The first rising of corruption, though it never blossom into outward act, is a sin ; ‘ then, who can understand his errors ?’ We do not know how much we owe to God.

4. Sin is the worst debt ; because it is an inexcusable debt in two respects ; 1 There is no denying the debt. 2. There is no shifting it off.

(1.) There is no denying the debt ; other debts men may deny. If money be not paid before witnesses, or if the creditor lose the bond, the debtor may say he owes him nothing ; but there is no denying this debt of sin. If we say we have no sin, God can prove the debt, Ps. l. 21. ‘ I will set thy sins in order before thee.’ God writes down our debts in his book of remembrance ; and God’s book, and the book of conscience do exactly agree, so that this debt cannot be denied.

(2.) There is no shifting off the debt ; other debts may be shifted off.

1. We may get friends to pay them, but neither man nor angel can pay this debt for us : if all the angels in heaven should go to make a purse, they cannot pay one of our debts.

2. In other debts men may get a protection, so that none can

touch their persons, or sue them for the debt; but who shall give us a protection from God's justice? Job x. 7. 'There is none that can deliver out of thine hand.' Indeed the Pope pretends that his pardon shall be men's protection, and now God's justice shall not sue them; but that is only a forgery, and cannot be pleaded at God's tribunal.

3. Other debts, if the debtor dies in prison, cannot be recovered, death frees them from debt; but if we die in debt to God, he knows how to recover it; as long as we have souls to strain on, God will not lose his debt. Not the death of the debtor, but the death of the surety, pays a sinner's debt.

4. In other debts men may flee from their creditor, leave their country, and go into foreign parts, and the creditor cannot find them; but we cannot flee from God. God knows where to find all his debtors, Ps. cxxxix. 7. 'Where shall I flee from thy presence? if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, there shall thy right-hand hold me.'

5. Sin is the worst debt, because it carries men, in case of non-payment, to a worse prison than any upon earth, to a fiery prison; and the sinner is laid in worse chains, chains of darkness, where the sinner is bound under wrath for ever.

Qn. 3. *Wherein have we the properties of bad debtors?*

Ans. 1. A bad debtor doth not love to be called to an account. There is a day coming when God will call his debtors to account, Rom. xiv. 12. 'So then, every man shall give an account for himself to God.' but we play away the time, and do not love to hear of the day of judgment; we love not that ministers should put us in mind of our debt, or speak of the day of reckoning. What a confounding word will that be to a secure sinner, *redde rationem*, give an account of your stewardship?

2. A bad debtor is unwilling to confess his debt, he will put it off, or make less of it; so we are more willing to excuse sin, than confess it. How hardly was Saul brought to confession; 1 Sam. xv. 20. 'I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, but the people took of the spoil.' He rather excuseth his sin than confesseth it.

3. A bad debtor is apt to hate his creditor, debtors with their creditors dead; so wicked men naturally hate God, because they think he is a just judge, and will call them to an account; Gr. God-haters. The debtor doth not love to see his creditor.

Use 1. It reproves them who are loth to be in debt, but make no reckoning of sin, which is the greatest debt; they use no means to get out of it, but run still further in debt to God. We would think it strange, if writs or warrants were out against a man, or a judgment granted to seize his body and estate, yet he

is secure and regardless, as if he were unconcerned. God hath a writ out against a sinner, nay, many writs, for swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, yet the sinner eats and drinks, and is quiet, as if he were not in debt; what opium hath Satan given men?

*Use 2. Exhortation.* If sin be a debt. 1. Let us be humbled. The name of debt (saith St. Ambrose) is *grave vocabulum*, grievous.

Men in debt are full of shame, they lie hid, and do not care to be seen. A debtor is ever in fear of arrest, *Canis latrat & cor palpitat*. O let us blush and tremble, who are so deeply indebted to God. A Roman dying in debt, Augustus the emperor sent to him for his pillow, because (saith he) I hope it hath some virtue in it to make me sleep, on which a man so much in debt could take his ease. We that have so many spiritual debts lying upon us, how can we be at rest till we have some hope that they are discharged.

2. Let us confess our debt. Let us acknowledge that we are run in arrears with God, and deserve that he should follow the law upon us, and throw us into hell-prison. By confession we give glory to God, Josh. vii. 19. ‘My son give glory to the God of Israel, and make confession to him.’ Say that God were righteous if he should strain upon all we have: if we confess the debt, God will forgive it, 1 John ii. 9. ‘If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive.’ Do but confess the debt, and God will cross the book, Ps. xxxii. 5. ‘I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest me.’

3. Labour to get our spiritual debts paid, that is, by our surety Christ. Say, “Lord, have patience with me, and Christ shall pay thee all. He hath laid down an infinite price.” The covenant of works would not admit of a surety, it demanded personal obedience: but this privilege we have by the gospel, which is a court of chancery to relieve us, that if we have nothing to pay, God will accept of surety. Believe in Christ’s blood, and the debt is paid.



LUKE XI. 4. *And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

In the words are two parts; 1. A petition, ‘forgive us our sins.’ 2. A condition, ‘For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.’ Our forgiving others is not a cause of God’s forgiving us, but it is a condition without which God will not forgive us.

*First.* I begin with the first, the petition, ‘Forgive us our

fin;’ a blessed petition! the ignorant world say, ‘Who will shew us any good?’ Pf. iv. 6. meaning a good lease, a good purchase; but our Saviour teacheth us to pray for that which is more noble, and will stand us in more stead, the pardon of sin, ‘forgive us our sins.’ Forgiveness of sins is a primary blessing, it is one of the first mercies God bestows, Ezek. xxx. 25. ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you; that is, forgiveness. When God pardons, there is nothing he will stick at to do for the soul; he will adopt, sanctify, crown.

Qu. 1. *What forgiveness of sin is?*

Ans. It is God’s passing by sin, Mic. vii. 18. his wiping off the score, and giving us a discharge.

The nature of forgiveness will more clearly appear, 1. By opening some scripture-phrases.

2. By laying down some divine aphorisms and positions.

(1.) By opening some scripture-phrases. 1. To forgive sin, is to take away iniquity, Job vii. 21. ‘Why dost thou not take away my iniquity?’ Heb. lift off. It is a metaphor taken from a man that carries an heavy burden ready to sink him, and another comes, and lifts off this burden; so, when the heavy burden of sin is on us, God in pardoning, lifts off this burden from the conscience, and lays it upon Christ, Isa. liii. 6. ‘He hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.’

2. To forgive sin, is to cover sin, Pf. lxxx. 2. ‘Thou hast covered all their sin.’ This was typified by the mercy-seat covering the ark; to shew God’s covering of sin through Christ. God doth not cover sin in the Antinomian sense, so as he sees it not, but he doth so cover it, as he will not impute it.

3. To forgive sin, is to blot it out, Isa. xliii. 25. ‘I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.’ The Hebrew word, to blot out, alludes to a creditor, who, when his debtor hath paid him, blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance; so God, when he forgives sin, blots out the debt, he draws the red lines of Christ’s blood over our sins, and so crosseth the debt book.

4. To forgive sin, is for God to scatter our sins as a cloud, Isa. xliv. 22. ‘I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions.’ Sin is the cloud interposeth, God dispels the cloud, and breaks forth with the light of his countenance.

5. To forgive sin, is for God to cast our sins into the depths of the sea, Micah vii. 19. which implies God’s burying them out of sight, that they shall not rise up in judgment against us. ‘Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.’ God will throw them in, not as cork that riseth again, but as lead that sinks to the bottom.

(2.) The nature of forgiveness will appear, by laying down some divine aphorisms or positions.

*Aphorism* 1. Every sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness; I

say, mortal, that is, deserves death. God may relax the rigour of the law, but every sin merits damnation. The Papists distinguish of mortal sins, and venial : some sins are *ex surreptione*, they creep unawares into the mind, (as vain thoughts, sudden motions of anger and revenge) these, saith Bellarmine, are in their own nature venial. It is true, the greatest sins are in one sense venial, that is, God is able to forgive them ; but the least sin is not in its own nature venial, but deserves damnation. We read of the lusts of the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. And the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19. The lusts of the flesh are sinful, as well as the works of the flesh. That which is a transgression of the law merits damnation ; but the first stirrings of corruption are a breach of the royal law, Rom. vii. 7. Prov xxiv. 9. therefore they merit damnation. So that the least sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness.

*Aphorism 2.* It is God only that forgives sin. To pardon sin is one of the *jura regalia*, the flowers of God's crown, Mark ii. 7. ' Who can forgive sins but God only ? ' It is most proper for God to pardon sin, only the creditor can remit the debt. Sin is an infinite offence, and no finite power can discharge an infinite offence. That God only can forgive sin, I prove thus :

No man can take away sin, unless he is able to infuse grace ; for (as Aquinas saith) with forgiveness is always infusion of grace ; but no man can infuse grace, therefore no man can forgive sin. He only can forgive sin, who can remit the penalty, but it is only God's prerogative royal to forgive sin.

Obj. 1. *But a Christian is charged to forgive his brother*, Col. iii. 13. ' *Forgive one another.*'

*Ans.* In all second-table sins, there are two distinct things ; 1. Disobedience against God. 2. Injury to man. That which man is required to forgive, is the wrong done to himself : but the wrong done to God, he cannot forgive. Man may remit a trespass against himself, but not a transgression against God.

Obj. 2. *But the scripture speaks of the power committed to ministers to forgive sin*, John xx. 23. ' *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.*'

*Ans.* Ministers cannot remit sin authoritatively and effectually, but only declaratively. They have a special office and authority to apply the promises of pardon to broken hearts. When a minister sees one humbled for sin, yet is afraid God hath not pardoned him, and is ready to be swallowed up of sorrow ; in this case, a minister, for the easing of this man's conscience, may, in the name of Christ, declare to him, that he is pardoned ; the minister doth not forgive sin by his own authority, but as an herald, in Christ's name, pronounceth a man's pardon. As it was with the priest in the law, God did cleanse the leper, the priest only did pronounce him clean, so it is God, who, by his

prerogative, doth forgive sin, the minister only pronounceth forgiveness to the sinner, being penitent.

Power to forgive sin authoritatively in one's own name, was never granted to any mortal man. A king may pardon a man's life, but not pardon his sin: popes' pardons are insignificant, like blanks in a lottery, good for nothing but to be torn.

*Aphorism 3.* Forgiveness of sin is purely an act of God's free grace. There are some acts of God which declare his power, as making and governing the world; other acts that declare his justice, as punishing the guilty; other acts that declare his free grace, as pardoning of sinners, Isa. xliii. 25. 'I am he that blotteth out sin for my own name sake.' As when a creditor freely forgives a debtor, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'I obtained mercy.' I was all over besprinkled with mercy. When God pardons a sin, he doth not pay a debt, but give a legacy. Forgiveness is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy; there is nothing we can do can deserve it: it is not our prayers, or tears, or good deeds, can purchase pardon. When Simon Magus would have bought the gift of the Holy Ghost with money, 'thy money (saith Peter) perish with thee,' Acts viii. 20. So they who think they can buy pardon of sin with their duties and alms, their money perish with them: forgiveness is an act of God's free-grace, here he displays the banner of love. This is that will raise the trophies of God's glory, and will cause the saints triumph in heaven, that when there was no worthiness in them, when they lay in their blood, God took pity on them, and held forth the golden sceptre of love in forgiving: forgiveness is a golden thread spun out of the bowels of free-grace.

*Aphorism or position 4.* Forgiveness is through the blood of Christ. Free grace is the inward cause moving, Christ's blood is the outward cause meriting pardon, Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' All pardons are sealed in Christ's blood; the guilt of sin was infinite, and nothing but that blood which was of infinite value could procure forgiveness.

*Obj.* But if Christ laid down his blood as the price of our pardon, then how can we say, God freely forgives sin? If this be a purchase, how is it by grace?

*Ans.* 1. It was God's free grace that found out a way of redemption through a Mediator. Nay, God's love appeared more in letting Christ die for us, than if he had forgiven us without exacting any satisfaction.

2. It was free grace moved God to accept of the price paid for our sins; that God should accept a surety: that one should sin, and another suffer, this was free-grace. So that forgiveness of sin, tho' it be purchased by Christ's blood, yet it is by free-grace.

*Aphorism 5.* In forgiveness of sin, God remits the guilt and penalty. *Remissa culpa, remittitur pœna.* Guilt is an obligation to punishment, guilt cries for justice : now God in forgiving doth indulge the sinner as to the penalty : God seems to say to the sinner thus, “ tho’ thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deservest to die, yet I will take off the penalty ; whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged.” When God pardons a soul, he will not reckon with him in a purely vindictive way, he stops the execution of justice.

*Aphorism 6.* By virtue of this pardon God will no more call sin into remembrance, Heb. viii. 12. ‘ Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’ God will pass an act of oblivion, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses ; when we fear God will call over our sins again after pardon, look into this act of indemnity, ‘ their iniquities will I remember no more.’ God is said therefore ‘ to blot out our sin.’ A man doth not call for a debt, when he hath crossed the book ; when God pardons a man, his former displeasure ceaseth, Hos. xiv. 4. ‘ Mine anger is turned away.’

Qu. *But is God angry with his pardoned ones ?*

Ans. Though a child of God, after pardon, may incur God’s fatherly displeasure, yet God’s judicial wrath is removed ; though God may lay on the rod, yet he hath taken away the curse : correction may befall the saints, but not destruction, Ps. lxxxix. 31. ‘ My loving kindness I will not take away.’

*Aphorism or position 7.* That sin is not forgiven till it be repented of ; therefore they are put together, Luke xxiv. 47. ‘ Repentance and remission.’ *Domine, da pœnitentiam & postea indulgentiam*, Fulgentius. 9. Now in repentance there are three main ingredients, and all these must be before forgiveness. 1. Contrition, 2. Confession. 3. Conversion. (1.) Contrition, or brokenness of heart, Ezek. vii. 16. ‘ They shall be like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his own iniquity.’ This contrition or rending of the heart, is expressed sometimes by smiting on the breast, Luke xviii. 13. sometimes by plucking off the hair, Ezra ix. 3. sometimes by watering the couch, Ps. vi. 6. But all humiliation is not contrition ; some have only pretended sorrow for sin, and so have missed of forgiveness ; Ahab humbled himself, his garments were rent not his heart.

Qu. *What is that remorse and sorrow which goes before forgiveness of sin ?*

Ans. It is an holy sorrow, it is a grieving for sin, *quatenus* sin, as it is sin, and as it is a dishonouring of God, and a defiling of the soul. Though there were no sufferings to follow, yet the true penitent would grieve for sin, Ps. li. 3. ‘ My sin is ever before me.’ This contrition goes before remission, Jer.



xxxi. 18, 19. 'I repented, I smote upon my thigh, is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him.' Ephraim was troubled for sinning, and God's bowels were troubled for Ephraim: the woman in the gospel stood at Jesus' feet weeping, and a pardon followed, Luke vii. 47. Wherefore I say 'her sins which are many, are forgiven her.' The seal is set upon the wax when it melts, God seals his pardon upon melting hearts.

(2.) The second ingredient into repentance is confession, Ps. li. 4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned.' This is not auricular confession, this the papists make a sacrament, and affirm, that without confession of all ones sins in the ears of the priests, no man can receive forgiveness of sin; the scripture is ignorant of it, nor do we read of any general council till the Lateran council, which was about twelve hundred years after Christ, did ever decree auricular confession.

Obj. *But doth not the scripture say, James v. 15. 'Confess your sins one to another?'*

Ans. This is absurdly brought for auricular confession; for by this, the priest must as well confess to the people, as the people to the priest. The sense of that place is, in case of public scandals, or private wrongs, here confession is to be made to others; but chiefly confession is to be made to God, who is the party offended; 'against thee, thee only have I sinned.' Confession gives vent to sorrow: confession must be free without compulsion, ingenuous without reserve, cordial without hypocrisy; the heart must go along with the confession. This confession makes way for forgiveness, Ps. xxxii. 5. 'I said I would confess my sins, and thou forgavest me.' When the publican and thief on the cross confessed, they had that pardon; the publican smote upon his breast, there was contrition; and said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' there was confession; he went away justified, there was forgiveness: and the thief on the cross, 'We indeed suffer justly,' There was confession: and Christ absolved him before he died, Luke xxiii. 41. 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Which words of Christ might occasion that saying of St. Austin, confession shuts the mouth of hell, and opens the gate of paradise.

3. The third ingredient in repentance is, conversion, or turning from sin, Judges x. 15. 'We have sinned,' there was confession; ver. 16. 'They put away their strange gods,' there was conversion. And it must be an universal turning from sin, Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Cast away from you all your transgressions.' You would be loth God should forgive only some of your sins; would you have God forgive all, and will not you forsake all? He that hides one rebel, is a traitor to the crown; he that lives in one known sin, is a traitorous hypocrite. And it must not

only be a turning from sin, but a turning unto God : therefore it is called ‘repentance (Acts xx. 20.) towards God.’ The heart points towards God, as the needle to the north pole. The prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father, Luke xv. 17. This repentance is the ready way to pardon, Isa. lv. 7. ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and turn to the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon.’ A king will not pardon a rebel, whilst he continues in open hostility. Thus you see repentance goes before remission : they who never repented, can have no ground to hope that their sins are pardoned.

7. *Aphorism* or *position* is, that sin is not forgiven till it be repented of.

*Caution.* Not that repentance doth merit the forgiveness of sin ; to make repentance satisfactory is popish ; by repentance, we please God but we do not satisfy him : Alas ! ‘Christ’s blood must wash our tears.’ Repentance is a condition, not a cause ; God will not pardon for repentance, nor yet without it : God seals his pardons on melting hearts : repentance makes us prize pardon the more. He who cries out of his broken bones, will the more prize the mercy of having them set again ; when there is nothing in the soul but clouds of sorrow, and now God brings a pardon (which is a setting up of a rainbow in the cloud, to tell the soul the flood of God’s wrath shall not overflow), O what joy at the sight of this rainbow ! the soul now burns in love to God.

8. *Aphorism* or *position*. The greatest sins come within the compass of forgiveness. Incest, sodomy, adultery, theft, murder, which are sins of the first magnitude, yet these are pardonable. Paul was a blasphemer, and so sinned against the first table ; a persecutor, and so he sinned against the second table ; yet he obtained mercy, 1 Tim. i. 13. I was all ‘besprinkled with mercy.’ Zaccheus, an extortioner, Mary Magdalene, an unchaste woman, out of whom seven devils were cast, Manassah, who made the streets run with blood, yet had their pardon. Some of the Jews, who had a hand in crucifying of Christ, were forgiven. God blots out not only the cloud, but the thick cloud, Isa. xlv. 22. Enormities as well as infirmities. The king in the parable forgave his debtor that owed him 10 000 talents, Matth. xviii. 27. a talent weighed 3000 shekels, 10,000 talents contained almost 12 ton of gold. This was an emblem of God’s forgiving great sins, Isa. i. 18. ‘Though your sins were as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow.’ Scarlet, in the Greek, is called twice dipped, and the art of man cannot wash out the dye again. But though our sins are of a scarlet dye, God’s mercy can wash them away : the sea can as well cover great rocks as little sands. This I mention that sinners may

not despair. God counts it a glory to him to forgive great sins ; now mercy and love ride in triumph, 1 Tim. i. 14. ' The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,' it was exuberant, it did overflow as Nilus. We must not measure God by ourselves : God's mercy excel our sins, as much as heaven doth earth, Isa. v. 57. If great sins could not be forgiven, then great sinners should not be preached to ; but the gospel is to be preached to all. If they could not be forgiven, it were a dishonour to Christ's blood ; as if the wound were broader than the plaister. God hath first made great sinners ' broken vessels,' he hath broken their hearts for sin, and then he hath made them ' golden vessels,' he hath filled them with the golden oil of pardoning mercy ; this may encourage great sinners to come in and repent. Indeed the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not but that there is mercy enough in God to forgive it, but because he who hath committed this sin will have no pardon ; he despises God, scorns his mercy, spills the cordial of Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot, he puts away salvation from him ; but else, the greatest sins are pardonable. When a poor sinner looks upon himself, and sees his guilt, and when he looks on God's justice and holiness, he falls down confounded ; but here is what may be as a cork to the net, to keep him from despair, if thou wilt leave thy sins and come to Christ, mercy can seal thy pardon.

*Aphorism* 9. When God pardons a sinner, he forgives all sins, Jer. xxxiii. 8. ' I will pardon all your iniquities,' Col. ii. 13. ' Having forgiven you all trespasses.' The mercy-seat covered the whole ark ; the mercy-seat was a type of forgiveness, to shew that God covers all our transgressions. He doth not leave one sin upon the score : he doth not take his pen, and for fourscore sins write down fifty, but blots out all sin, Ps. ciii. 3. ' Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' When I say, God forgives all sins, I understand it of sins past ; but sins to come are not forgiven till they are repented of. Indeed God hath decreed to pardon them : and when God forgives one sin, he will in time forgive all : but sins future are not actually pardoned, till they are repented of ; it is absurd to think sin should be forgiven, before it is committed.

1. If all sins past and to come are at once forgiven, then, what need a man pray for the pardon of sin ? It is a vain thing to pray for the pardon of that which is already forgiven.

2. This opinion, that sins to come (as well as past are forgiven, doth take away and make void Christ's intercession : Christ is an advocate to intercede for daily sins, 1 John ii. 1. But if sin be forgiven before it be committed, what need is there of Christ's daily intercession ? what need have I of an advocate if sin be pardoned before it be committed ? So that

God, though he forgives all sins past to a believer, yet sins to come are not forgiven, till repentance be renewed.

*Aphorism 10.* Faith doth necessarily antecede forgiveness; there must be believing on our part, before there is forgiving on God's part, Acts x. 43. 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' So that faith is a necessary antecedent to forgiveness. There are two acts of faith, to accept Christ, and to trust in Christ, to accept of his terms, to trust in his merits: and he who doth neither of these, can have no forgiveness, he who doth not accept Christ, cannot have his person; he that doth not trust in him, cannot have benefit by his blood. So that, without faith, no remission.

*Aphorism 11.* Though justification and sanctification are not the same, yet God never pardons a sinner, but he doth sanctify him. Justification and sanctification are not the same.

1. Justification is without us, sanctification is within us. The one is by righteousness imputed, the other is by righteousness imparted.

2. Justification is equal, sanctification is gradual. Sanctification doth *recipere majus et minus*; one is sanctified more than another, but one is not justified more than another; one hath more grace than another, but he is not more a believer than another.

3. The matter of our justification is perfect, viz. Christ's righteousness: but our sanctification is imperfect, these are the 'spots of God's children,' Deut. xxxii. 5. Our graces are mixed, our desires are defiled. Thus justification and sanctification are not the same: yet, for all that, they are not separated: God never pardons and justifies a sinner, but he doth sanctify him, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are justified, but ye are sanctified.' 1 John v. 6. 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.' Christ comes to the soul by blood, that denotes remission; and by water, that denotes sanctification. Let no man say he is pardoned, that is not made holy. And this, I the rather urge against Antinomians, who talk of being forgiven their sin, and having a part in Christ, and yet remain unconverted, and live in the grossest sins. Pardon and healing go together, Isa. lxvii. 19. 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace. And I will heal him.' Peace is the fruit of pardon, and then it follows, 'I will heal him.' Where God pardons he purifies: as in the inauguration of kings, with the crown there is the oil to anoint: so when God crowns a man with forgiveness, there he gives the anointing oil of grace to sanctify, Rev. ii. 17. 'I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name.' A 'white stone,' that is absolution: and a 'new name' in the stone, that is sanctification.

1. If God should pardon a man, and not sanctify him, this would be a reproach to him; then he should love and be well pleased with men in their sins, which is diametrically contrary to his holy nature.

2. If God should pardon, and not sanctify, then he could have no glory from us. God's people are formed to shew forth his praise, Isa. xliii. 21. but if he should pardon and not sanctify us, how could we shew forth his praise? How could we glorify him? What glory can God have by a proud, ignorant, profane heart?

3. If God should pardon, and not sanctify, then that should enter into heaven which defileth; but Rev. xxi. 27. 'Nothing shall enter that defileth.' Then God should settle the inheritance upon men before they are fit for it, contrary to that, Col. i. 12. 'He hath made us meet for the inheritance;' how is that but by the divine unction? So that, whoever God forgives, he transforms. Let no man say his sins are forgiven, who doth not find an inherent work of holiness in his heart.

*Aphorism 12.* Where God remits sin he imputes righteousness. This righteousness of Christ imputed, is a salvo to God's law, and makes full satisfaction for the breaches of it. This righteousness procures God's favour; God cannot but love us, when he sees us in his Son's robe, which both covers and adorns us. In this spotless robe of Christ we outshine the angels: theirs is but the righteousness of creatures, this is the righteousness of God himself, 2 Cor. v. 21. 'That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' How great a blessing then is forgiveness? With remission of sin is joined imputation of righteousness.

*Aphorism 13.* They whose sins are forgiven, must not omit praying for forgiveness, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' Believers who are pardoned, must be continual suitors for pardon. When Nathan told David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin,' 2 Sam. xii. 13. yet David, after that, composed a penitential psalm for the pardon of his sin. Sin, after pardon, rebels. Sin, like Samson's hair, though it be cut, will grow again. We sin daily, and must as well ask for daily pardon, as for daily bread. Besides, a Christian's pardon is not so sure, but he may desire to have a clearer evidence of it.

*Aphorism 14.* A full absolution from all sin is not pronounced till the day of judgment. The day of judgment is called 'a time of refreshing,' when sin shall be completely blotted out, Acts iii. 19. Now God blots out sin truly, but then it shall be done in a more public way; God will openly pronounce the saints' absolution before men and angels: their happiness is not completed till the day of judgment, because then their pardon shall be solemnly pronounced, and there shall be the triumphs

of the heavenly host. At that day it will be true indeed, that God sees no sin in his children : they shall be as pure as the angels ; then the church shall be presented without wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. She shall be as free from stain as guilt ; then Satan no more accuse, Christ will shew the debt-book crossed in his blood ; therefore the church doth so pray for Christ's coming to judgment, Rev. xxii. 17. ' The bride saith, Come, Lord Jesus : ' light the lamps, then burn the incense.

*Use 1.* Of information. From this word, ' Forgive,' we learn that if the debt of sin be no other way discharged but by being forgiven, then we cannot satisfy for it. Among other damnable opinions of the church of Rome, this is one, man's power to satisfy for sin. The council of Trent holds, that God is satisfied by our undergoing the penalty imposed by the censure of priests : and, again, we have works of our own, by which we may satisfy for our wrongs done to God : by these opinions, let any judge what the popish religion is. They intend to pay the debt they owe God themselves, to pay it in part, and do not look to have it all forgiven : but why did Christ teach us to pray, ' Forgive us our sins,' if we can of ourselves satisfy God for the wrong we have done him ? This doctrine robs God of his glory, Christ of his merit, and the soul of salvation. Alas ! is not the lock cut where our strength lay ? Are not all our works fly-blown with sin, and can sin satisfy for sin ? This doctrine makes men their own saviours : it is most absurd to hold ; for, can the obedience of a finite creature satisfy for an infinite offence ? Sin being forgiven, clearly implies we cannot satisfy for it.

2. From this word *us*, ' forgive us,' we learn that pardon is chiefly to be sought for ourselves : for though we are to pray for the pardon of others, James vi. 16. ' Pray one for another,' yet in the first place, we are to beg pardon for ourselves. What, will another's pardon do us good ? Every one is to endeavour to have his own name in the pardon. A son may be made free by his father's copy, but he cannot be pardoned by his father's pardon, he must have a pardon for himself. In this sense, selfishness is lawful, every one must be for himself, and get a pardon for his own sins. ' Forgive us.'

3. From this word *our*, ' our sins,' we learn how just God is in punishing us. The text says, ' our sins ; ' we are not punished for other men's sins, but our own. *Nemo habet de proprio, nisi peccatum* Augustine. There is nothing we can call so properly ours, as sin. Our daily bread we have from God, our daily sins we have from ourselves. Sin is our own act, a web of our own spinning ; how righteous therefore is God in punishing of us ? we sow the seed, and God only makes us reap what we sow, Jer. xvii. 10. ' I give every man the fruit of his

own doings.' When we are punished, we but taste the fruit of our own grafting.

4. From this word *sins*, see from hence the multitude of sins we stand guilty of. We pray not, forgive us our sin, (as if it were only a single debt,) but sins, in the plural: so vast is the catalogue of our sins, that David cries out, 'Who can understand his errors?' Psal. xix. 12. Our sins are like the drops in the sea, like the atoms in the sun, they exceed all arithmetic. Our debts we owe to God, we can no more number, than we can satisfy; which, as it should humble us, to consider how full of black spots our souls are, so it should put us upon seeking after the pardon of our sins. And this brings to the second *use*.

*Exhortation.* To labour to have the forgiveness of sin sealed up to us. How can we eat, or drink, or sleep without it? It is sad dying without a pardon; this is to fall into the labyrinth of despair; of this the next time.

*Use 2.* Let us labour for the forgiveness of sin. If ever this was needful, then now, when the times ring changes, and danger seems to be marching towards us. Labour, I say, for the forgiveness of sin: this is a main branch of the charter or covenant of grace, Heb. x. 12. 'I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more.' It is mercy to feed us, but it is rich mercy to pardon us; this is spun and woven out of the bowels of free-grace. Earthly things are no signs of God's love; he may give the venison, but not the blessing: but when God seals up forgiveness, he gives his love and heaven with it, Ps. xxi. 3. 'Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.' A crown of gold was a mercy, but if you look into Ps. ciii. you shall find a greater mercy, ver. 3, 4. 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness.' To be crowned with forgiveness and loving-kindness, is a far greater mercy than to have a crown of pure gold set upon the head. It was a mercy when Christ cured the palsy man; but when Christ said to him, 'thy sins are forgiven,' Mark ii. 5. this was more than to have his palsy healed: forgiveness of sin is the chief thing to be sought after; and sure, if conscience be once touched with a sense of sin, there is nothing a man will thirst after more than forgiveness, Psal. li. 3. 'My sin is ever before me.' This made David so earnest for pardon, Psal. li. 1. 'Have mercy upon me, O God, blot out my transgressions.' If one should have come to David, and asked him, David, where is thy pain? what is it troubles thee? is it the fear of shame which shall come on thee and thy wives? is it the fear of the sword which God hath threatened shall not depart from thy house? He would have said, No, it is only my sin pains me; 'My sin is ever before me.' Were but this remov-

ed by forgiveness, though the sword did ride in circuit in my family, I would be well enough content. When the arrow of guilt flicks in the conscience, nothing is so desirable as to have this arrow plucked out by forgiveness. O therefore seek after 'forgiveness of sin.' Can you make a shift to live without it? but how will you do to die without it? will not death have a sting to an unpardoned sinner? how do you think to get to heaven without forgiveness? As at some solemn festivals, there is no being admitted unless you bring a ticket: so, unless you have this ticket to shew, 'forgiveness of sin,' there is no being admitted into the holy place of heaven. Will God ever crown those that he will not forgive? O be ambitious of pardoning grace. When God had made Abraham great and large promises, Abraham replies, 'Lord, what is all, seeing I go childless?' Gen. xv. 2. So, when God hath given thee riches, and all thy heart can wish, say to him, Lord, what is all this, seeing I want forgiveness? Let my pardon be sealed in Christ's blood. A prisoner in the tower is in an ill case, notwithstanding his brave diet, great attendance, soft bed to lie on, because, being impeached, he looks every day for his arraignment, and is afraid of the sentence of death; in such a case, and worse, is he, that swims in the pleasures of the world, but his sins are not forgiven: a guilty conscience doth impeach him, and he is in fear of being arraigned and condemned at God's judgment seat. Give not then sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eye-lids, till you have gotten some well-grounded hope that your sins are blotted out. Before I come to press the exhortation to seek after forgiveness of sin, I shall propound one question.

*Qu. If pardon of sin be so absolutely necessary, without it no salvation, what is the reason that so few in the world seek after it? If they want health, they repair to the physician; if they want riches, they take a voyage to the Indies; but if they want forgiveness of sin, they seem to be unconcerned, and do not seek after it: whence is this?*

*Ans.* 1. Inadvertancy, or want of consideration: they do not look into their spiritual estate, or cast up their accounts to see how matters stand between God and their souls, Isa. i. 3. 'My people do not consider:' they do not consider they are indebted to God in a sum of ten thousand talents, and that God will, ere long, call them to account, Rom. xiv. 12. 'So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.' But people shun serious thoughts; 'my people do not consider.' Hence it is they do not look after pardon.

3. Men do not seek after forgiveness of sin, for want of conviction. Few are convinced what deadly evil sin is, it is the spirits of mischief distilled, it turns a man's glory into shame, it



brings all plagues on the body, and curses on the soul. Unless a man's sin be forgiven, there is not the vilest creature alive, the dog, serpent, toad, but is in a better condition than the sinner; for when they die, they go but to the earth; but he dying without pardon goes into hell-torments for ever. Men are not convinced of this, but play with the viper of sin.

3. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness, because they are seeking other things: they seek the world immoderately. When Saul was seeking after the asses, he did not think of a kingdom. The world is a golden snare. *Divitiæ sæculi sunt laquei diaboli*, Bern. The wedge of gold hinders many from seeking after a pardon. Ministers cry to the people, get your pardon sealed: but if you call to a man that is in a mill, the noise of the mill drowns the voice, that he cannot hear: so, when the mill of a trade is going, it makes such a noise, that the people cannot hear the minister when he lifts up his voice as a trumpet, and cries to them to look after the sealing of their pardon. He who spends all his time about the world, and doth not mind forgiveness, will accuse himself of folly at last. You would judge that prisoner very unwise, that should spend all his time with the cook to get his dinner ready, and should never mind getting a pardon.

4. Men seek not after the forgiveness of sin, through a bold presumption of mercy; they conceit God to be made up all of mercy; and that he will indulge them, though they take little or no pains to sue out their pardon. It is true God is merciful, but withal he is just, he will not wrong his justice by shewing mercy. Read the proclamation, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 'The Lord, the Lord God merciful;' ver. 7. 'and that will by no means clear the guilty.' Such as go on in sin, and are so slothful or wilful, that they will not seek after forgiveness, though there be a whole ocean of mercy in the Lord, not one drop shall fall to their share, 'he will by no means clear the guilty.'

5. Men seek not earnestly after forgiveness, out of hope of impunity. They flatter themselves in sin, and because they have been spared so long, therefore sure, God never intends to reckon with them, Ps. x. 11. 'He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hides his face he will never see it.' Atheists think, either the judge is blind, or forgetful; but let sinners know, that long forbearance is no forgiveness, God did bear with Sodom a long time, but at last rained down fire and brimstone upon them, the adjourning of the assizes doth not acquit the prisoner: the longer God is taking the blow, the heavier it will be at last, if sinners repent not.

6. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness through mistake; they think getting a pardon is easy, it is but repenting

at the last hour, a sigh, or a Lord have mercy, and a pardon will drop into their mouths. But, is it so easy to repent, and have a pardon? tell me, O sinner, is regeneration easy? are there no pangs in the new birth? Is mortification easy? is it nothing to pluck out the right eye? is it easy to leap out of Dalilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? This is the draw-net, by which the devil drags millions to hell, the facility of repenting and getting a pardon.

7. Men do not look after forgiveness through despair. Oh, faith the desponding soul, it is a vain thing for me to expect pardon; my sins are so many and heinous, that sure God will not forgive me, Jer. xviii. 12. 'And they said, There is no hope.' My sins are huge mountains, and, can they ever be cast into the sea? Despair cuts the sinews of endeavour; who will use means that despairs of success? The devil shews some men their sins at the little end of the perspective-glass, and they seem little, or none at all: but he shews others their sins at the great end of the perspective, and they fright them into despair. This is a soul-damning sin, Judas' despair was worse than his treason. Despair spoils the cordial of Christ's blood: this is the voice of despair, Christ's blood cannot pardon me. Thus you see whence it is that men seek not more earnestly after the forgiveness of sin. Having answered this question, I shall now come to press the exhortation upon every one of us, to seek earnestly after the forgiveness of our sins.

1. Our very life lies upon the getting of a pardon: it is called the 'justification of life,' Rom. v. 18. Now, if our life lies upon our pardon, and we are dead and damned without it, doth it not concern us above all things to labour after forgiveness of sin? Deut. xxxii. 47. 'For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.' If a man be under a sentence of death, he will set his wits a-work, and make use of all his friends to get the king to grant him a pardon, because his life lies upon it: so we are, by reason of sin, under a sentence of damnation: now, there is one friend at court we may make use of to procure our pardon, namely, the Lord Jesus: how earnest then should we be with him to be our Advocate to the Father? for us, and that he would present the merit of his blood to the Father, as the price of our pardon?

2. There is that in sin may make us desire forgiveness. Sin is the only thing that disquiets the soul. 1. Sin is a burden, it burdens the creation, Rom. viii. 22. it burdens the conscience, Ps. xxxviii. 4. A wicked man is not sensible of sin, he is dead in sin; and if you lay a thousand weight upon a dead man, he feels it not. But to an awakened conscience there is no such burden as sin; when a man seriously weighs with himself the glory and purity of that Majesty which sin hath

offended, the preciousness of that soul which sin hath polluted, the loss of that happiness which sin hath endangered, the greatness of that torment which sin hath deserved, to lay all this together, sure must make sin burdensome : and should not we labour to have this burden removed by pardoning mercy ? 2. Sin is a debt, Matth. vi. 13. 'Forgive us our debts ;' and every debt we owe, God hath written down in his book. Isa. lxiv. 6. 'Behold it is written before me,' and one day God's debt-book will be opened, Rev. xx. 12. 'The books were opened.' And, is not this that which may make us look after forgiveness ? Sin being such a debt as we must eternally lie in the prison of hell for, if it be not discharged ; shall not we be earnest with God to cross the debt-book with the blood of his Son ? There is no way to look God in the face with comfort, but by having our debts either paid, or pardoned.

3. There is nothing but forgiveness can give ease to a troubled conscience. There is a great difference between the having the fancy pleased, and having the conscience eased : worldly things may please the fancy, but not ease the conscience : nothing but pardon can relieve a troubled soul. It is strange what shifts men will make for ease when conscience is pained, and how many false medicines they will use, before they will take the right way for a cure. When conscience is troubled, they will try what merry company can do ; they may perhaps drink away trouble of conscience ; perhaps they may play it away at cards ; perhaps a lent-whipping will do the deed ; perhaps multitude of business will so take up their time, that they shall have no leisure to hear the clamours and accusations of conscience : but how vain are all these attempts ! still their wound bleeds inwardly, their heart trembles, their conscience roars, and they can have no peace. Whence is it ? Here is the reason, they go not to the mercy of God, and the blood of Christ, for the pardon of their sins ; and hence it is they can have no ease. Suppose a man hath a thorn in his foot, which puts him to pain ; let him anoint it, or wrap it up, and keep it warm ; yet till the thorn be plucked out, it aches and swells, and he hath no ease : so when the thorn of sin is gotten into a man's conscience, there is no ease till the thorn be pulled out ; when God removes iniquity, now the thorn is plucked out. How was David's heart finely quieted, when Nathan the prophet told him, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin,' 2 Sam. xii. 13. How should we therefore labour for forgiveness ! till then we can have no ease in our mind : nothing but a pardon sealed with the blood of the Redeemer, can ease a wounded spirit.

4. Forgiveness of sin is feasible ; it may be obtained. Impossibility destroys endeavour ; but, as Ezra x. 2. 'There is hope in Israel concerning this.' The devils are past hope ; a

sentence of death is past upon them, which is irrevocable ; but there is hope for us of obtaining a pardon, Psal. cxxx. 4. ‘ There is forgiveness with thee.’ If pardon of sin were not possible, then it were not to be prayed for ; but it hath been prayed for, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. ‘ I beseech thee, O Lord, take away mine iniquity ;’ and Christ bids us pray for it, ‘ Forgive us our trespasses.’ That is possible which God hath promised, but God hath promised pardon upon repentance, Isa. lv. 7. ‘ Let the wicked forsake his way, and return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.’ Hebrew, He will multiply to pardon. That is possible which others have obtained ; but others have arrived at forgiveness, therefore it is haveable, Psal. xxxii. 5. Isaiah xxxviii. 17. ‘ Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.’ This may make us endeavour after pardon, because it is feasible it may be had.

5. Consideration to persuade to it, is, forgiveness of sin is a choice eminent blessing : to have the book cancelled, and God appeased, is worth obtaining ; which may whet our endeavour after it. That it is a rare transcendent blessing, appears by three demonstrations.

1<sup>st</sup>, If we consider how this blessing is purchased, namely, by the Lord Jesus. There are three things in reference to Christ, which set forth the choiceness and preciousness of forgiveness.

1. No mere created power in heaven or earth could expiate one sin, or procure a pardon : only Jesus Christ. 1 John ii. 2. ‘ He is the propitiation for our sins.’ No merit can buy out a pardon. Paul had as much to boast of as any man, his high birth, his learning, his legal righteousness ; but he disclaims all in point of justification, and lays them under Christ’s feet to tread upon. No angel could, with all his holiness, lay down a price for the pardon of one sin, 2 Sam. iii. 25. ‘ If a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him ?’ What angel durst be so bold, as to open his mouth to God for a delinquent sinner ? Only Jesus Christ, who is God-man, could deal with God’s justice, and purchase forgiveness.

2. Christ himself could not procure a pardon, but by dying ; every pardon is the price of blood. Christ’s life was a rule of holiness, and a pattern of obedience, Mat. iii. 15. ‘ He fulfilled all righteousness.’ And certainly, Christ’s active obedience was of great value and merit ; but here is that which raiseth the worth of forgiveness, Christ’s active obedience had not fully procured a pardon for us without the shedding of his blood : therefore our justification is ascribed to his blood, Rom. v. 9. ‘ Being justified by his blood.’ Christ did bleed out our pardon. There’s much ascribed to Christ’s intercession, but

his intercession had not prevailed with God for the forgiveness of one sin, had not he shed his blood. It is worth our notice, that when Christ is described to John as an intercessor for his church, he is represented to him in the likeness of a Lamb slain, Rev. v. 6. to shew that Christ must die, and be slain, before he can be an intercessor.

3. Christ, by dying, had not purchased forgiveness for us, if he had not died an execrable death: he endured the curse, Gal. iii. 13. All the agonies Christ endured in his soul, all the torments in his body, could not purchase a pardon, except he had been made a curse for us, Christ must be cursed, before we could be blessed with a pardon.

2dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, if we consider what glorious attributes God puts forth in the pardoning of sin. (1.) God puts forth infinite power: when Moses was pleading with God for the pardon of Israel's sin, he speaks thus, 'Let the power of my Lord be great,' Numb. xiv. 17. God's forgiving of sin is a work of as great power as to make heaven and earth, nay, a greater: For, when God made the world, he met with no opposition; but, when he comes to pardon. Satan opposeth, and the heart opposeth. A sinner is desperate, and flights, yea, defies a pardon, till God, by his mighty power, convinceth him of his sin and danger, and makes him willing to accept of a pardon. (2.) God, in forgiving sins, puts forth 'infinite mercy,' Numb. xiv. 19. 'Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.' It is mercy to have a reprieve; and if there be mercy in sparing a sinner, what mercy then is in pardoning him? This is the *flos lactis*, the cream of mercy. For God to put up with so many injuries, to wipe so many debts off the score, this is infinite favour; forgiveness of sin is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy.

3dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, as it lays a foundation for other mercies. It is a leading mercy. 1. It makes way for temporal good things. (1.) It brings health. When Christ said to the palsy man, 'Thy sins are forgiven,' this made way for a bodily cure, 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk,' Matth. ix. 6. The pardon of his sins made way for the healing of his palsy. (2.) It brings prosperity, Jer. xxxiii. 8. 9. 2. It makes way for spiritual good things. Forgiveness of sin never comes alone, but hath other spiritual blessings attending it. Whom God pardons, he sanctifies, adopts, crowns. It is a voluminous mercy, it draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. It is an high act of indulgence, God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. And should not we, above all things, seek after so great a blessing as forgiveness?

6. Consideration, that which may make us seek after forgiveness of sin is, 'God's inclinableness to pardon,' Neh. ix. 16. 'Thou art a God ready to pardon.' In the Hebrew it is, "A God of pardons." We are apt to entertain wrong conceits of God, that he is inexorable, and will not forgive, Mat. xxv. 24. 'I knew thou wert an hard man.' But God is a fin pardoning God, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 'The Lord, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.' Here is my name (saith God) if you would know how I am called, I tell you my name, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, forgiving iniquity.' A pirate or rebel, that knows there is a proclamation out against him, will never come in; but, if he hears that the prince is full of clemency, and there is a proclamation of pardon to him, if he submit, this will be a great incentive to him to lay down his arms, and become loyal to his prince. See God's proclamation to repenting sinners, Jer. iii. 12. 'Go and proclaim these words, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon thee, for I am merciful.' God's mercy is a tender mercy. The Hebrew word for mercy signifies bowels. God's mercy is full of sympathy, he is of a most sweet indulgent nature, Psal. lxxxvi. 5. 'Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.' The bee doth not more naturally give honey, than God shews mercy.

Obj. 1. *But doth not God seem to delight in punitive acts, or acts of severity?* Prov. i. 26. 'I will laugh at your calamity.'

Ans. Who doth God say so to? See verse 25. 'Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.' God delights in their destruction who despise his instruction; but an humble penitentiary breaking off sin, and suing out his pardon, the Lord delights in shewing mercy to such an one, Micah vii. 18. 'He delighteth in mercy.'

Obj. 2. *But though God be so full of mercy, and ready to forgive, yet his mercy reacheth not to all; he forgives only such as are elected, and I question my election?*

Ans. 1. No man can say he is not elected: God hath not revealed this to any particular man, that he is a reprobate, excepting him only, who hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost: which sin thou art far enough from, [who mournest for sin, and seekest after forgiveness.

2. These thoughts of non-election, that we are not elected, and that there is no pardon for us, come from Satan, and are the poisoned arrows he shoots. He is the accuser; he accuseth us to God, that we are great sinners; and, he accuseth God to us, as if he were a tyrant. One that did watch to destroy his creature, these are diabolical suggestions; say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'

3. It is sinful for any to hold that he is not elected ; it would take him off from the use of means, from praying, and repenting ; it would harden him, and make him desperate : therefore pry not into the *arcana cœli*, the secrets of heaven. Remember what befel the men of Bethshemesh, for looking into the ark, 1 Sam. vi. 19. Know that we are not to go to God's secret will, but by his revealed will ; look into God's revealed will, and there we shall find enough to cherish hope, and encourage us to go to God for the pardon of our sins. God hath revealed in his word, ' that he is rich in mercy,' Eph. ii. 4. That he doth not ' delight in the destruction of a sinner,' Ezek. xviii. 32. *Jurat per essentiam*, (Musculus). He swears by his essence, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. ' As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' Hence it is God waits so long, and puts off the sessions from time to time, to see if sinners will repent, and seek to him for pardon : therefore let God's tender mercies and precious promises encourage us to seek to him for the forgiveness of our sins.

Consideration 7. Not to seek earnestly for pardon, is the unspeakable misery of such as want forgiveness ; it must needs be ill with that malefactor that wants his pardon.

1. The unpardoned sinner (that lives and dies so) is under the greatest loss and privation. Is there any happiness like to the enjoying of God in glory ; this is the joy of angels, the crown of saints glorified : but the unforgiven sinner shall not behold God's smiling face ; he shall see God as an enemy, not as a friend ; he shall have an affrighting sight of God, not beatifical ; he shall see the black rod, not the mercy-seat. Sins unpardoned are like the angel with a flaming sword, who stopped the passage to paradise ; sins unpardoned stop the way to the heavenly paradise ; and how doleful is the condition of that soul which is banished from the place of bliss, where the King of glory keeps his court ?

2. The unpardoned sinner hath nothing to do with any promise ; the promises are *milk-trailia evangelii*, the breasts that hold the sincere milk of the word, which fills the soul with precious sweetness ; they are the royal charter : but what hath a stranger to do to meddle with the charter ? It was the dove plucked the olive-branch ; it is only the believer plucks the tree of the promise. Till the condition of the promise be performed, no man can have right to the comfort of the promise ; and how sad is that, not to have one promise to shew for heaven ?

3. An unpardoned sinner is continually in danger of the outcry of an accusing conscience. An accusing conscience is a little hell. *Siculi non invenire tyranni tormentum majus*. We tremble to hear a lion roar ; how terrible are the roarings of conscience ? Judas hanged himself to quiet his conscience : a sin-

ner's conscience at present is either asleep or feared ; but when God shall awaken conscience, either by affliction or at death, how will the unpardoned sinner be affrighted ? When a man shall have all his sins set before his eyes, and drawn out in their bloody colours, and the worm of conscience begins to gnaw ; sinner, here are thy debts, and the book is not cancelled, thou must to hell ; O what a trembling at heart will the sinner have !

4. All the curses of God stand in full force against an unpardoned sinner. His very blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2. 'I will curse your blessings.' His table is a snare ; he eats and drinks a curse. What comfort could Dionysius have at his feast, when he imagined he saw a naked sword hanging by a twine-thread over his head ? This is enough to spoil a sinner's banquet : a curse like a naked sword, hangs over his head : Cæsar wondered to see one of his soldiers so merry that was in debt. One would wonder that man would be merry who is heir to all God's curses ; he doth not see these curses, but is blinder than Balaam's ass, who saw the angel's sword drawn.

5. The unpardoned sinner is in an ill case at death. Luther professed, there were three things which he durst not think of without Christ ; of his sins, of death, of the day of judgment. Death to a Christless soul is the 'king of terrors.' As the prophet Ahijah said to Jeroboam's wife, 1 Kings xiv. 6. 'I am sent to thee with heavy tidings ;' so death is sent to the unpardoned soul with heavy tidings ; it is God's jailor to arrest him. Death is a prologue to damnation : in particular,

(1.) Death is a voider, to take away all his earthly comforts, it takes away his sugared morsels ; no more drinking wine in bowls, no more mirth or music, Rev. xviii. 22. 'The voice of harpers and musicians shall be heard no more at all in thee.' The sinner shall never taste of luscious delights more to all eternity ; his honey shall be turned into the 'gall of asps,' Job xx. 14.

(2.) At death there shall be an end put to all reprieves. Now God reprieves a sinner, he spares him such a fit of sickness ; he respites him many years ; the sinner should have died such a drinking-bout, but God granted him a reprieve : he lengthened out the silver thread of patience to a miracle ; but the sinner dying without repentance, unpardoned, now the lease of God's patience is run out, and the sinner must appear in person, before the righteous God, to receive his sentence ; after which there shall be none to bail him : nor shall he hear of of a reprieve any more.

6. The unpardoned sinner, dying so, must go into damnation : this is the second death, *mors sine morte*. The unpardoned soul must for ever bear the anger of a sin-avenging God ;



as long as God is God, so long the vial of his wrath shall be dropping upon the damned soul ; this is an helpless condition. There is a time when a sinner will not be helped : Christ and salvation are offered to him, but he slights them, he will not be helped : and there is a time shortly coming, when he cannot be helped ; he calls out for mercy, O a pardon, a pardon ! but then it is too late, the date of mercy is expired ; O how sad then is it to live and die unpardoned ? you may lay a grave-stone upon that man, and write this epitaph upon it, ' It had been good for that man that he had never been born.' Now if the misery of an unpardoned state be so inexpressible, how should we labour for forgiveness, that we may not be ingulphed in so dreadful a labyrinth fire and brimstone to all eternity ?

7. Such as are unpardoned must needs lead uncomfortable lives, Deut. xxviii. 66. ' Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt be in continual fears.' Thus the unpardoned sinner must needs have a palpitation and trembling at the heart ; he fears every bush he sees, 1 John iv. 18. ' Fear hath torment in it.' The Greek word for torment, *kolasís*, is used sometimes for hell ; fear hath hell in it. A man in debt fears every step he goes, lest he should be arrested : so the unpardoned sinner fears, what if this night death, which is God's serjeant, should arrest him ? Job. vii. 21. ' Why dost not thou pardon my sin ? For now shall I sleep in the dust ? as if Job had said, ' Lord, I shall shortly die, I shall sleep in the dust ? and what shall I do if my sins be not pardoned ?' What comfort can an unpardoned soul take in any thing ? Sure no more than a prisoner can take in meat or music, that wants his pardon. Therefore, by all these powerful motives, let us labour for the forgiveness of sin.

Obj. 1. *But I am discouraged from going to God for pardon, for I am unworthy of forgiveness ; what am I, that God should do such a favour for me ?*

Ans. God forgives, not because we are worthy, but because he is gracious, Exod. xxxiv. 6. ' The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious.' God forgives out of his clemency : acts of pardon, are acts of grace. What worthiness was there in Paul before conversion ? He was a blasphemer, and so he sinned against the first table ; he was a persecutor, and so he sinned against the second table : but free-grace sealed his pardon, 1 Tim. i. 13. ' I obtained mercy ;' I was all bestowed with mercy. What worthiness was in the woman of Samaria ? She was ignorant, John iv. 22. She was unclean, ver. 18. She was morose and churlish, she would not give Christ so much as a cup of cold water, ver. 9. ' How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria ?' What worthiness was here ? Yet Christ overlooked all, and pardoned her ingrati-

tude ; and though she denied him water out of the well, yet he gave her the water of life. *Gratia non invenit dignos, sed facit.* Free-grace doth not find us worthy, but makes us worthy. Therefore, notwithstanding unworthiness, seek to God, and your sins may be pardoned.

Obj. 2. *But I have been a great sinner, and sure God will not pardon me.*

*Ans.* David brings it as an argument for pardon, Pf. xxv. 11. ‘Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.’ When God forgives great sins, now he doth a work like himself. The desperateness of the wound doth the more set forth the virtue of Christ’s blood in curing it. Mary Magdalene, a great sinner, out of whom seven devils were cast, yet she had her pardon. Some of the Jews, who had an hand in crucifying of Christ, upon their repentance, the very blood they shed did seal their pardon. Consider sins either for their number, as the sands of the sea ; or for their weight as the rocks of the sea ; yet there is mercy enough in God to forgive them, Isa. i. 18. ‘Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow.’ Scarlet signifies twice dipped, which no art of man can get out ; yet God can wash out this scarlet dye. There is no sin excepted from pardon, but that sin which despiseth pardon, viz. the sin against the Holy Ghost, Mat. xii. 31. Therefore, O sinner, do not cast away thy anchor of hope, but go to God for forgiveness. The vast ocean hath bounds set to it, but God’s pardoning mercy is boundless. God can as well forgive great sins, as less ; as the sea can as well cover great rocks, as little sands. Nothing hinders pardon, but the sinner’s not asking it.

That a great sinner should not despair of forgiveness, consult that scripture, Isa. xliii. 25. ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.’ If you look on the foregoing words, you would wonder how this verse comes in, ver. 24. ‘Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities ;’ and then it follows, ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.’ One would have thought it should have run thus, ‘Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities ; I, even I, am he that will punish thy iniquities ;’ but God comes in a mild loving strain, ‘Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities, I am he that blots out thy iniquities.’ So that the greatness of our sins should not discourage us from going to God for forgiveness. Though thou hast committed acts of impiety, yet God can come with an act of indemnity, and say, ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.’ God counts it his glory to display free grace in its orient colours, Rom. v. 20. ‘Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.’ When sin becomes exceeding sinful, free-grace becomes exceeding glorious. God’s pardoning love can conquer

the sinner, and triumph over the sin. Consider, thou almost despairing soul, there is not so much sin in man, as there is mercy in God : man's sin in comparison of God's mercy, is but as a spark to the ocean : and who would doubt whether a spark could be quenched in an ocean.

Obj. 3. *But I have relapsed into the same sins, and how can I have the face to come to God for pardon of those sins which I have more than once fallen into ?*

Ans. I know that the Novations held that after a relapse no forgiveness by the church. But, doubtless, that was an error : Abraham did twice equivocate, Lot committed incest twice, Peter sinned thrice by carnal fear ; but these, repenting, had their absolution.

There is a twofold relapse, 1. A wilful relapse, when, after a man hath solemnly vowed himself to God, he falls into a league with sin, and returns back to it, Jer. ii. 25. 'I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.'

2. There is a relapse through infirmity, when the bent and resolution of a man's heart is against sin, but, through the violence of temptation, and withdrawing of God's grace, he is carried down the stream against his will. Now, though wilful and continued relapses are desperate, and do *vastare conscientiam*, (as Tertul.) waste the conscience, and run men upon the precipice of damnation ; yet, if they are through infirmity, and we mourn for them, we may obtain forgiveness. A godly man doth not march after sin as his general, but is led captive by it ; and the Lord will pity a captive prisoner. Christ commands us to forgive a trespassing brother, seventy-times seven, Matth. xviii. 22. If he bids us do it, much more will he forgive a relapsing sinner in case he repent, Jer. iii. 22. 'Return, thou backsliding Israel, for I am merciful, saith the Lord.' It is not falling once or twice into the mire that drowns, but lying there ; it is not once relapsing into sin, but lying in sin impenitently, that damns.

Obj. 4. *But God requires so much sorrow and humiliation before remission, that I fear I shall never arrive at it.*

Ans. God requires no more humiliation than may fit a soul for mercy. Many a Christian thinks, because he hath not filled God's bottle so full of tears as others, therefore he is not humbled enough to receive a pardon. But we must know God's dealings are various ; all have not the like pangs in the new birth : some are won with love, the sense of God's mercy abused, causeth ingenuous tears to flow ; others are more flagitious and hardened, and these God deals more roughly with. This is sure, that soul is humbled enough to receive a pardon, who is brought to a thorough sense of sin, and sees the need of a Saviour, and loves him as the fairest of ten thousand : therefore

be not discouraged, if thy heart be bruised for sin, and broken off from it, thy sin shall be blotted out. No sooner did Ephraim fall a-weeping, but God's bowels fell a-working, Jer. xxxi. 20. 'My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him.' Having answered these objections, let me beseech you above all things, labour for the forgiveness of sin: think with yourselves, how great a mercy it is: it is one of the richest jewels in the cabinet of the new covenant, Pf. xxxii. 1. 'Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven.' In the Hebrew it is blessednesses. And think with yourselves, the unparalleled misery of such whose sins are not forgiven. Such as had not the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon their door-posts, were destroyed by the angel, Exod. xii. So they who have not Christ's blood sprinkled on them, to wash away the guilt of sin, will fall into the gulf of perdition. And if you resolve to seek after forgiveness, do not delay.

Many say they will go about the getting their pardon, but they procrastinate and put it off so long, till it be too late; when the shadows of the evening are stretched forth, and the night of death approacheth, then they begin to look after their pardon. This hath been the undoing of millions; they purpose they will look after their souls, but they stay so long till the lease of mercy be run out: Oh, therefore hasten the getting of a pardon! think of the uncertainty of life. What security have you that you shall live another day? *Volat ambiguis mobilis aliis hora.* Our life is a taper soon blown out; it is made up of a few flying minutes. O thou dust and ashes! thou mayest fear every hour to be blown into thy grave; and what if death come to arrest thee before thy pardon be sealed? Plutarch reports of one Archias, who being among his cups, one delivered to him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being about serious business; saith he *jèrio cras*, I will mind serious things to-morrow; and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, to-morrow I will repent, I will get my pardon, thou mayest suddenly be slain; therefore to-day, while it is called to-day, look after the forgiveness of sin: after a while, all the conduits of mercy will be stopped, there will not be one drop of Christ's blood to be had, there is no sealings of pardon after death.

2. *Branch of Exhortation.* Let us labour to have the evidence of pardon, to know that our sins are forgiven. A man may have his sins forgiven, and not know of it; he may have a pardon in the court of heaven, when he hath it not in the court of conscience. David's sin was forgiven as soon as he repented. And God sent Nathan the prophet to tell him so, 1 Sam. xii. 13. But David did not feel the comfort of it at present, as appears by the penitential psalm composed after, Pf. li. 8 'Make me to hear the voice of joy;' and ver. 12. 'Cast me not away

from thy presence.' It is one thing to be pardoned, and another to feel it. The evidence of pardon may not appear for a time, and this may be,

1. From the imbecility and weakness of faith. Forgiveness of sin is so strange and infinite a blessing, that a Christian can hardly persuade himself that God will extend such a favour to him; as it is said of the apostles, when Christ appeared to them first, 'they believed not for joy, and wondered,' Luke xxiv. 41. So the soul is so stricken with admiration, that the wonder of pardon doth almost stagger his faith.

2. A man may be pardoned, and not know it, from the strength of temptation. Satan accuseth the godly of sin, and tells them that God doth not love them; what, should such sinners think of pardon? Believers are compared to bruised reeds, Matth. xii. 20. And temptations to winds, Matth. vii. 15. Now, a reed is easily shaken with the wind. Temptations shake the godly; and though they are pardoned, yet they know it not; Job in a temptation thought God his enemy, Job xvi. 9. Yet then he was in a pardoned condition.

Qu. *But why doth God sometimes conceal the evidence of pardon?*

Ans. Though God doth pardon, yet he may withhold the sense of it a while;

1. Because hereby he would lay us lower in contrition. God would have us see what an evil and bitter thing it is to offend him; we shall therefore lie the longer sleeping ourselves in the brinish tears of repentance, before we have the sense of pardon: it being long before David's broken bones were set and his pardon sealed, the more contrite his heart was, and this was a sacrifice God delighted in.

2. Though God did forgive sin, yet he may deny the manifestation of it for a time, to make us prize pardon, and make it sweeter to us when it comes. The difficulty of obtaining a mercy enhanceth the value: when we have been a long time tugging at prayer for a pardon of sin, and still God withholds, but at last, after many sighs and tears, pardon comes; now we esteem it the more, and it is sweeter,—*Quo longius desertur, eo juxius laetatur*,—The longer mercy is in the birth, the more welcome will the deliverance be.

Let me now re-assume the exhortation to labour for the evidence and sense of pardon. He who is pardoned and knows it not, is like one who hath an estate befallen him, but knows it not. Our comfort consists in the knowledge of forgiveness, Psal. li. 8. 'Make me to hear the voice of joy.' This is a proclaiming a jubilee in the soul, when we are able to read our pardon; and to the witness of conscience God adds the witness

of his Spirit ; in the mouth of these two witnesses our joy is confirmed : O labour for this evidence of forgiveness.

*Qu. How shall we know that our sins are forgiven ?*

*Ans.* we must not be our own judges in this case, Prov. xxviii. 26. ‘ He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.’ ‘ The heart is deceitful,’ Jer. xvii. 9. And it is folly to trust a deceiver. The Lord only by his word must be judge in this case, whether we are pardoned, or not. As it was under the law, no leper might judge himself to be clean ; ‘ but the priest was to pronounce him clean.’ Lev. xiii. 37. So, we are not to judge of ourselves to be clean from the guilt of sin, till we are such as the word of God hath pronounced to be clean.

*Qu. How then shall we know by the word whether our guilt is done away and our sins pardoned ?*

*Ans.* 1. The pardoned sinner is a great weeper. The sense of God’s love melts his heart : that free grace should ever look upon me ; that such crimson sins should be washed away in Christ’s blood ! this makes the heart melt, and the eyes drop with tears ; never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes, Luke vii. 38. ‘ She stood at his feet weeping ;’ her heart was a spiritual limbeck, out of which those tears were distilled. Mary’s tears were more precious to Christ, than her ointment ; her eyes, which before did sparkle with lust, whose amorous glances had set on fire her lovers ; now she makes them a fountain, and washeth Christ’s feet with her tears. She was a true penitent and had her pardon, ver. 47. ‘ Wherefore, I say, her sins, which were many are forgiven.’ A pardon will make the hardest heart relent, and cause the stony heart to bleed ; and, is it thus with us ? Have we been dissolved into tears for sin ? God seals his pardons upon melting hearts.

2. We may know our sins are forgiven, by having the grace of faith infused, Acts x. 43. ‘ To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins.’ In saving faith there are two things, abrenunciation, and recumbency ; 1. Abrenunciation : a man renounceth all opinion of himself, digged out of his own borough ; he is quite taken off himself, Phil. iii. 9. He sees all his duties are but broken reeds ; though he could weep a sea of tears : though he had all the grace of men and angels, it could not purchase his pardon. 2. Recumbency. Faith is an assent with alliance : the soul doth get hold of Christ, as Adonijah did of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings i. 51. Faith casts itself upon the stream of Christ’s blood, and saith, If I perish, I perish. If we have but the *minimum quod sic*, the last drachm of this precious faith, we have something to shew for pardon. ‘ To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sin.’ 1. This faith is acceptable to God, it pleas-

eth God more than offering up ten thousand rivers of oil, than working miracles, than martyrdom, or the highest acts of obedience. 2. Faith is profitable to us ; it is our best certificate to shew for pardon : no sooner doth faith reach forth its hand to receive Christ, but Christ sets his hand to our pardon.

3. *Sign.* The pardoned soul is a God-admirer, Micah vii. 18. ' Who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity ? ' O that God should ever look upon me, I was a sinner, and nothing but a sinner, yet I obtained mercy ? Who is a God like thee ? Mercy hath been despised, yet that mercy should save me : Christ hath been crucified by me, yet his cross crowns me. God hath displayed the ensigns of free grace, he hath set up his mercy above my sin, nay, in spite of it, this causeth admiration, ' Who is a God like thee ? ' A man that goes over a narrow bridge in the night, and the next morning comes and sees the danger he was in, and how miraculously he escaped ; he is stricken with admiration ; so, when God shews a soul how near he was a-falling into hell, and how that this gulph is shut, all his sins are pardoned, he is amazed, and cries out, ' Who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity ? ' That God should pardon one, and pass by another ; one taken, another left ; this fills the soul with wonder and astonishment.

4. Wherever God pardons sin, he subdues it, Micah vii. 19. ' He will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquity. ' Where mens' persons are justified, their lusts are mortified. There is in sin *vis imperatoria & damnatoria*, a commanding power, and a condemning. Then is the condemning power of sin taken away, when the commanding power of it is taken away. When we know whether our sins are forgiven, are they subdued ? If a malefactor be in prison, how shall he know that his prince hath pardoned him ? If the jailor come and knock off his chains and fetters, and lets him out of prison, then he may know he is pardoned : so, how shall we know God hath pardoned us ? If the fetters of sin be broken off, and we walk at liberty in the ways of God, Psal. cxix. 45. ' I will walk at liberty ; ' this is a blessed sign we are pardoned.

Such as are washed in Christ's blood from their guilt, are made kings to God, Rev. i. 6. As kings they rule over their sins.

5. He whose sins are forgiven, is full of love to God. Mary Magdalene's heart was fired with love, Luke vii. 47. ' Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much. ' Her love was not the cause of her remission, but a sign of it. A pardoned soul is a monument of mercy, and he thinks he can never love God enough ; he wishes he had a coal from God's altar, to inflame his heart in love ; he wishes he could borrow the wings of the cherubims, that he might fly swifter in obedience :

a pardoned soul is sick of love. He whose heart is like marble, lockt up in impenitency, that doth not melt in love, a sign his pardon is yet to seal.

6. Where the sin is pardoned, the nature is purified, Hof. xiv. 9. 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them.' Every man, by nature, is both guilty and diseased: where God remits the guilt, he cures the disease, Pf. ciii. 3. 'Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.' Herein God's pardon goes beyond the king's pardon; the king may forgive a malefactor, but he cannot change his heart, he may have a chieftest heart still: but God, when he pardons, changeth the heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart also will I give you.' A pardoned soul is adorned and embellished with holiness, 1 John v. 6. 'This is he that came by water and blood.' Where Christ comes with blood to justify, he comes with water to cleanse, Zech. iii. 4. 'I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' I will cause thy iniquity to pass from thee, there is pardoning grace; and I will clothe thee with change of raiment, there is sanctifying grace: let not him say, he hath pardon, that wants grace. Many tells us, they hope they are pardoned, but were never sanctified; yea, but they believe in Christ: but what faith is it? A swearing faith, a whoring faith; the faith of devils is as good.

7. Such as are in the number of God's people, forgiveness of sin belongs to them, Isa. xl. 1. 'Comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is forgiven.'

Qu. *How shall we know that we are God's elect people?*

Ans. By three characters.

(1.) God's people are an humble people, the livery which all Christ's people wear, is humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'Be ye clothed with humility.' 1. A sight of God's glory humbles: Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed by, Job xlii. 5. 'Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself.' The stars vanish when the sun appears. 2. A sight of sin humbles. In the glass of the word the godly see their spots, and these are humbling spots. Lo, saith the soul, I can call nothing my own but sins and wants; this humbles. A humble sinner is in a better condition than a proud angel.

(2.) God's people are a willing people: Psal. cx. 3. 'A people of willingness:' love constrains them: they serve God freely, and out of choice. They stick at no service; they will run through a sea and a wilderness; they will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

(3.) They are an heavenly people, stars, John xvii. 6. 'Ye are not of the world.' As the *primum mobile* in the heavens hath a motion of its own, contrary to the other orbs; so God's



people have an heavenly motion of soul, contrary to the men of the world : they use the world as their servant, but do not follow the world as their master, Phil. iii. 20. ' Our conversation is in heaven.' Such as have these three characters of God's people, have a good certificate to shew that they are pardoned. Forgiveness of sin belongs to them : ' comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is forgiven.'

8. A sign we are pardoned, if, after many storms, we have a sweet calm and peace within, Rom. v. 1. ' Being justified we have peace.' After many a bitter tear shed, and heart-breaking, the mind hath been more sedate, and a sweet serenity or still music hath followed ; this brings tidings, God is appeased : whereas before conscience did accuse, now it doth secretly whisper comfort : this is a blessed evidence a man's sins are pardoned. If the bailiffs do not trouble and arrest the debtor, it is a sign his debt is compounded or forgiven : so, if conscience do not vex or accuse, but upon good grounds whisper consolation, this is a sign the debt is discharged, the sin is forgiven.

9. A sign sin is forgiven, when we have hearts without guile, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. ' Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'

Qu. *What is this to be sine fuco, without guile ?*

1. He who is without guile, hath plannets of heart : he is without collusion, he hath not *corduplex*, a double heart ; his heart is right with God. A man may do a right action, but not with a right heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. ' Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' To have the heart right with God, is to serve God from a right principle, love ; by a right rule, the word ; to a right end, the glory of God.

2. An heart without guile dares not allow itself in the least sin ; he avoids secret sins. He dares not hide any sin, as Rachel did her father's images, under her, Gen. xxxi. 34. He knows God sees him, which is more than if men and angels did behold him. He avoids complexion-sins, Ps. xviii. 23. ' I was also upright before him, and kept myself from my iniquity.' As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin. An heart without guile takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it thro' his beloved sin.

3. An heart without guile desires to know the whole mind and will of God. An unsound heart is afraid of the light *lucifugo*, he is not willing to know his duty. A sincere soul faith, as Job xxxiv. 32. ' What I know not, teach thou me : ' Lord shew me what is my duty, and wherein I offend ; let me not sin for want of light, what I know not, teach thou me.

4. An heart without guile is uniform in religion : he hath

an equal eye to all God's commands. 1. He makes conscience of private duties; he worships God in his closet as well as in the temple. Jacob, when he was alone, wrestled with the angels, Gen. xxxii. 3, 4. So a Christian when he is alone, wrestles with God in prayer, and will not let him go till he hath blessed him. 2. He performs difficult duties, wherein the heart and spirit of religion lie, and which do cross flesh and blood: he is much in self-humbling and self-examining. *Utitur speculis magis quam per specillis*, Sen. He rather useth the looking-glass of the word to look into his own heart, than the broad spectacles of censure to spy the faults of others.

5. An heart without guile is true to God's interest. 1. He grieves to see it go ill with the church. Nehemiah, though the king's cup bearer, and wine so near, yet was sad when Zion's glory was eclipsed, Neh. ii. 3. Like the tree I have read of, if any of the leaves are cut, the rest of the leaves begin to shrink up themselves, and for a time to hang down the head; so a sincere soul, when God's church suffers, feels himself as it were touched in his own person. 2. He rejoiceth to see the cause of God get ground; to see truth triumph, piety lifts up his head, and the flowers of Christ's crown flourish. This is an heart without guile, it is loyal and true to God's interest.

6. An heart without guile is just in his dealings: as he is upright in his words, so he is upright in his weights. He makes conscience of the second table as well as the first: he is for equity as well as piety, 1 Thess. iv. 6. 'That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.' A sincere heart thinks he may as well rob as defraud: his rule is 'to do to others what he would have them do to him,' Mat. vii. 12.

7. An heart without guile is true in his promises: his word is as good as his bond. If he hath made a promise, though it be to his prejudice, and doth entrench upon his profit, he will not go back. The hypocrite plays fast and loose, flees from his word; there is no more binding him with oaths and promises, than Samson could be bound with green withs, Judges xvi. 7. A sincere soul saith as Jephtha, Judges xi. 35. 'I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.'

8. An heart without guile is faithful in his friendship: he is what he pretends; his heart goes along with his tongue, as a well-made dial goes with the sun. He cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. Counterfeiting of love is hypocrisy. It is too usual to betray with a kiss, 2 Sam. xx. 9. 'Joab took Abner by the beard to kiss him, and smote him in the fifth rib that he died.' Many deceive with sugar words. Physicians use to judge of the health of the body by the tongue; if that look well, the body is in health: but we cannot judge of friendship by the tongue: the words may be full of honey, when the

heart hath the gall of malice : sure his heart is not true to God, who is treacherous to his friend. Thus you see what an heart without guile is ; now, to have such a heart is a sign sin is pardoned ; ‘ God will not impute sin to him in whose spirit there is no guile.’ What a blessed thing is this, not to have sin imputed ? If our sins be not imputed, it is as if we had no sin : sins remitted, are as if they had not been committed : this is the blessing belongs to a sincere soul, God imputes not iniquity to him in whose spirit is no guile.

9. He whose sins are forgiven, is willing to forgive others who have offended him, Eph. iv. 32. ‘ Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.’ An hypocrite will read, come to church, give alms, build hospitals, but cannot forgive wrongs, he will rather want forgiveness from God than he will forgive his enemies. A pardoned soul argues thus, hath God been so good to me, to forgive me my sins, and shall not I imitate him in this ? Hath he forgiven me pounds, and shall I not forgive pence. It is noted of Cranmer, *nihil oblivisci solet praeter injurias*, Cicero. He was of a forgiving spirit, and would do offices of love to them that had injured him ; like the sun, which having drawn up black vapours from the earth, returns them back in sweet showers.

By this touchstone we may try whether our sins are pardoned : we need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins be forgiven, but let us look into our hearts ; are we of forgiving spirits ? Can we bury injuries, requite good for evil ? A good sign we are forgiven of God. If we can find all these things wrought in our souls, they are happy signs that our sins are pardoned, and are good letters testimonial to shew for heaven.

*Use 3. Consolation.* I shall open a box of cordials, and shew you some of the glorious privileges of a pardoned condition. This is a peculiar favour, it is a spring shut up, broached for none but the elect. The wicked may have forbearing mercy, but only an elect person hath forgiving mercy. Forgiveness of sin makes way for solid joy, Isa. xl. 1. ‘ Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem :’ or, as in the Hebrew, “ speak to her heart.”—What was this must cheer her heart ? ‘ Tell her that her iniquity is pardoned :’ if any thing would comfort her, the Lord knew it was this. When Christ would cheer the palsy man, Matth. ix. 2. ‘ Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.’ It was a greater comfort to have his sins forgiven, than to have his palsy healed. This made David put on his best clothes, and anoint himself, 2 Sam. xii. 20. It was strange his child was newly dead, and God had told him ‘ the sword shall not depart from his house ;’ yet now he sprueth up himself, he puts on his best clothes, and anoints himself : whence was this ? David

had heard good news: God sent him his pardon by Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. xii. 13. 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.' This could not but revive his heart, and in token of joy, he anoints himself. Philo saith, it was an opinion of some of the philosophers, that among the heavenly spheres there was such sweet harmonious melody, that if the sound of it could reach our ears, it would affect us with wonder and delight. Sure he who is pardoned hath such a divine melody in his soul, as doth replenish him with infinite delight. When Christ had said to Mary Magdalene, 'thy sins are forgiven:' he presently adds, 'go in peace,' Luke vii. 50. More particularly,

1. *Comfort.* God looks upon a pardoned soul, as if he had never sinned. As the cancelling a bond nulls the bond, and makes it as if the money had never been owing, forgiving sin makes it not to be. Where sin is remitted, it is as if it had not been committed, Jer. i. 20. So that, as Rachel wept because her children were not, so a child of God may rejoice because his sins are not. God looks upon him as if he had never offended: though sin remain in him after pardon, yet God doth not look upon him as a sinner, but as a just man.

2. *Comfort.* God having pardoned sin, will pass an act of oblivion, Jer. xxxi. 34. 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' When a Creditor hath crossed the book, he doth not call for the book again. God will not reckon with the sinner in a judicial way. When our sins are laid upon the head of Christ, our scape-goat, they are carried into a land of forgetfulness.

3. *Comfort.* The pardoned soul is for ever secured from the wrath of God. How terrible is God's wrath? Ps. xc. 11. 'Who knows the power of thine anger?' If a spark of God's wrath when it lights upon a man's conscience, fills it with such horror (as in the case of Spira) then, what is it to be always scorching in that torrid zone, to lie upon beds of flames? Now, from this avenging wrath of God every pardoned soul is freed: though he may taste of the bitter cup of affliction, yet he shall never drink of the sea of God's wrath, Rom. v. 9. 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath thro' him.' Christ's blood quencheth the flames of hell.

4. *Comfort.* Sin being pardoned, conscience hath no more authority to accuse. Conscience roars against the unpardoned sinner, but it hath nothing to do to terrify or accuse him that is pardoned. God hath discharged the sinner, and if the creditor discharge the debtor, what hath the serjeant to do to arrest him? The truth is, if God absolve, conscience, if rightly informed, absolves; if once God saith thy sins are pardoned, conscience saith, 'go in peace.' If the sky be clear, and no storms blow there, then the sea is calm; if all be clear above,

and God shine with pardoning mercy upon the soul, then conscience is calm and serene.

5. *Comfort.* Nothing that befalls a pardoned soul shall hurt him, Ps. xci. 10. 'No evil shall touch thee;' that is, no destructive evil. Every thing to a wicked man is hurtful. Good things are for his hurt. His very blessings are turned into a curse, Mal. ii. 2. 'I will curse your blessings.' Riches and prosperity do him hurt. They are not *munera*, but *infidia*, Sen. 'Gold snares,' Eccl. v. 12. 'Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Like Haman's banquet, which did usher in his funeral. Ordinances do a sinner hurt; they are a 'favour of death,' 2 Cor. ii. 16. Cordials themselves kill. The best things hurt the wicked, but the worst things which befall a pardoned soul shall do him no hurt: the sting, the poison, the curse is gone; his soul is no more hurt, than David hurt Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment.

6. To a pardoned soul, every thing hath a commission to do him good. Affliction shall do him good; 'poverty, reproach, persecution,' Gen. l. 20. 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.' As the elements, though of contrary qualities, yet God hath so tempered them, that they work for the good of the universe; so the most cross providences shall work for good to a pardoned soul. Correction shall be a corrosive to eat out sin; it shall cure the swelling of pride, the fever of lust, the dropsy of avarice. It shall be a refining fire to purify grace, and make it sparkle as gold. Every cross providence, to a pardoned soul, shall be like Paul's Euroclydon or cross wind, Acts xxvii. which though it broke the ship, yet Paul was brought to shore upon the broken pieces.

7. A pardoned soul is not only exempted from wrath, but invested with dignity; as Joseph was not only freed from prison, but advanced to be second man in the kingdom.

A pardoned soul is made a favourite of heaven. A king may pardon a traitor, but will not make him one of his privy-council; but whom God pardons, he receives into favour. I may say to him, as the angel to the virgin Mary, Luke i. 30. 'Thou hast found favour with God.' Hence such as are forgiven, are said to be 'crowned with loving-kindness,' Ps. ciii. 3, 4. Whom God pardons he crowns. Whom God absolves, he marries himself to, Jer. iii. 12. 'I am merciful, and I will not keep anger for ever:' there is forgiveness; and in the 14th verse, 'I am married to you:' and he who is matched into the crown of heaven, is as rich as the angels, as rich as heaven can make him.

8. Sin being pardoned, we may come with humble boldness to God in prayer, guilt makes us afraid to go to God. Adam having sinned, Gen. iii. 10. 'I was afraid, and hid myself.'

Guilt clips the wings of prayer, it fills the face with blushing : but forgiveness breeds confidence : we may look upon God as a Father of mercy, holding forth a golden sceptre : he that hath got his pardon, can look upon his prince with comfort.

9. Forgiveness of sin makes our services acceptable ; God takes all we do in good part. A guilty person, nothing he doth pleaseth God. His prayer is ‘ turned into sin ;’ but when sin is pardoned, now God accepts our offering. We read of Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord : ‘ Joshua was cloathed with filthy garments,’ Zech. iii. 3. That is, he was guilty of divers sins : now, saith the Lord, ver. 5. ‘ Take away his filthy garments, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee ;’ and then he stood and ministered before the Lord, and his services were accepted.

10. Forgiveness of sin is the sauce which sweetens all the comforts of this life. As guilt embitters our comforts, it puts wormwood into our cup ; so, pardon of sin sweetens all, it is like sugar to wine. Health and pardon, estate and pardon relish well. Pardon of sin gives a sanctified title, and a delicious taste to every comfort. As Naaman said to Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 23. ‘ Take two talents ;’ so saith God to the pardoned soul, take two talents, take the venison, and take a blessing with it ; take the oil in the cruse, and take my love with it : ‘ take two talents.’ It is observable, Christ joins these two together, ‘ Give us our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses :’ as if Christ would teach us, there is little comfort in daily bread, unless sin be forgiven. Forgiveness doth perfume and drop sweetness into every earthly enjoyment.

11. If sin be forgiven, God will never upbraid us with our former sins. When the prodigal came home to his father, the father received him into his loving embraces, and never mentioned his former luxury, or spending his estate among harlots : so God will not upbraid us with former sins ; nay, he will entirely love us, we shall be his jewels, and he will put us in his bosom. Mary Magdalene, a pardoned penitent, after Christ arose, he appeared first to her, Mark xvi. 9. so far was Christ from upbraiding her, that he brings her the first news of his resurrection.

12. Sin being pardoned, is a pillar of support in the loss of dear friends. God hath taken away thy child, thy husband ; but withal he hath taken away thy sins. He hath given thee more than he hath taken away ; he hath taken away a flower, and given thee a jewel. He hath given thee Christ and the Spirit, and the earnest of glory. He hath given thee more than he hath taken away.

13. Where God pardons sins, he bestows righteousness. With remission of sin goes imputation of righteousness, Isa. lxi.

10. 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' If a Christian can take any comfort in his inherent righteousness, which is so stained and mixed with sin, O then what comfort may he take in Christ's righteousness, which is a better righteousness than that of Adam? Adam's righteousness was mutable; but suppose it had been unchangeable, yet it was but the righteousness of a man: but that righteousness which is imputed, is the righteousness of him who is God, 2 Cor. v. 21. 'That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' O blessed privilege, to be reputed, in the sight of God, righteous as Christ, having his embroidered robe put upon the soul! this is the comfort of every one that is pardoned, he hath a perfect righteousness; and now God saith of him, 'thy art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee,' Cant. iv. 7.

14. A pardoned soul needs not fear death. He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith. To a pardoned soul death hath lost his sting. Death, to a pardoned sinner, is like the arresting a man after the debt is paid, death may arrest, but Christ will shew the debt-book crossed in his blood. A pardoned soul may triumph over death, 'O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!' he who is pardoned needs not fear death, it is not a destruction, but a deliverance: it is to him a day of jubilee or release, it releaseth him from all his sins. Death comes to a pardoned soul, as the angel did to Peter, it smote him and beat off his chains, and carried him out of prison; so doth death to him who is pardoned, it smites his body, and the chains of sin fall off. Death gives a pardoned soul a *quietus est*, it frees him from all his labours, Rev. xiv. 13. *Felix transitus a labore ad requiem*, Bern. Death, as it will wipe off our tears, so it will wipe off our sweat. Death will do a pardoned Christian the greatest good turn, therefore it is made a part of the inventory, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 'Death is yours.' Death is like the waggon which was sent for old Jacob, it came rattling with its wheels, but it was to carry Jacob to his son Joseph; so the wheels of death's chariot may rattle, and make a noise, but they are to carry a believer to Christ. While a believer is here, he is absent from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6. He lives far from court, and cannot see him whom his soul loves: but death gives him a sight of the King of glory, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy.' To a pardoned soul, death is *transitus ad regnum*; it removes him to the place of bliss, where he shall hear the triumphs and anthems of praise sung in the choir of angels. No cause hath a pardoned soul to fear death; what needs he fear to have his body buried in the earth, who hath his sins buried in Christ's wounds? What hurt can death do to him? It is but his ferry-man to ferry him over

to the land of promise. The day of death to a pardoned soul, is his ascension day to heaven, his coronation-day, when he shall be crowned with those delights of paradise, which are unspeakable and full of glory. Thus you see the rich consolations which belong to a pardoned sinner; well might David proclaim him blessed, Psal. xxxii. 1. ‘Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven;’ in the Hebrew it is in the plural, blessednesses. Here is a plurality of blessings. Forgiveness of sin is like the first link of a chain, which draws all the links after it; it draws these fourteen privileges after it; it crowns with grace and glory. Who then would not labour to have his sins forgiven? ‘Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered.’

Now follow the duties of such as have their sins forgiven.—Mercy calls for duty. Be much in praise and doxology, Psal. ciii.

1. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thy iniquities.’ Hath God crowned you with pardoning mercy, set the crown of your praise upon the head of free grace. Pardon of sin is a discriminating mercy, a jewel hung only upon the elect: this calls for acclamation of praise. You will give thanks for ‘daily bread,’ and will you not much more for pardon? You will give thanks for deliverance from sickness, and will you not from deliverance from hell? God hath done more for you in forgiving your sin, than if he had given you a kingdom. And that you may be more thankful, do but set the unpardoned condition before your eyes: how sad is it to want a pardon? All the curses of the law stand in full force against such an one. The unpardoned sinner dying, he drops into the grave and hell both at once; he must quarter among the damned; and will not this make you thankful, that this is not your condition, but that you are ‘delivered from the wrath to come?’

2. Let God’s pardoning love inflame your hearts with love to God. For God to pardon freely without any desert of yours, to pardon so many offences, that he should pardon you and pass by others; that he should take you out of the ruins of mankind, and of a clod of dust and sin, make you a jewel sparkling with heavenly glory; will not this make you love God much? Three prisoners that deserve to die, if the king pardon one of these, and leave the other two to the severity of the law, will not he that is pardoned love his prince, who hath been so full of clemency? How should our hearts be endeared in love to God? The schoolmen distinguish of a twofold love, *amor gratuitous*, a love of bounty; that is, God’s love to us in forgiving; and *amor debitus*, a love of duty; that is, our love to God by way of retaliation. We should shew our love by admiring God, by



sweetly solacing ourselves in him, and binding ourselves to him in a perpetual covenant.

3. Let the sense of God's love in forgiving, make you more cautious and fearful of sin for the future, Pl. cxxx. 4. 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' O fear to offend this God, who hath been so gracious to you in forgiving. If a friend hath done a kindness for us, we will not disoblige him, or abuse his love. After Nathan had told David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin : ' how tender was David's conscience? How fearful was he of staining his soul with the guilt of more blood? Pl. li. 14. 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.' Men committing gross sins after pardon, God changeth his carriage towards them, he turns his smile into a frown; they lie, as Jonah, in the 'belly of hell : ' God's wrath falls into their conscience, as a drop of scalding lead into the eye; the promises are as a fountain sealed, not a drop of comfort comes from them. O Christians, do you not remember what it cost you before to get your pardon? how long it was before your 'broken bones' were set; and will you again venture to sin? You may be in such a condition, that you may question whether you belong to God or not; though God doth not damn you he may send you to hell in this life.

4. If God hath given you good hope that you are pardoned, walk cheerfully, Rom. v. 11. 'We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.' 'Who should rejoice, if not he that hath his pardon? God rejoiceth when he shews us mercy; and should not we rejoice when we receive mercy? In the saddest times a pardoned soul may rejoice. Afflictions have a commission to do him good, every cross wind of providence shall blow him nearer to the haven of glory. Christian, God hath pulled off your prison fetters, and clothed you with the robe of righteousness, and crowned you with loving-kindness, and yet art thou sad, Rom. v. 2. 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Can the wicked rejoice who have only a short reprieve from hell, and not they who have a full pardon sealed?

5. Hath God pardoned you? do all the service you can for God, 1 Cor. xv. 58. 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Let your head study for God, let your hands work for him, let your tongue be the organ of his praise. Paul got his pardon, 1 Tim. i. 16. 'I obtained mercy : ' and this was as the oil to the wheels it made him move faster in obedience, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.' Paul's obedience did not move slow, as the sun on the dial: but swiftly, as the sun in the firmament. 'He did spend, and was spent for Christ : ' The pardoned soul thinks he can never love God enough, or serve him enough.

The last thing is to lay down some rules or directions, how we may obtain forgiveness of sin.

1. We must take heed of mistakes about pardon of sin.

*1st* Mistake, that our sins are pardoned, when they are not.

Qu. *Whence is this mistake?*

*Ans.* From two grounds.

1. Because God is merciful.

*Ans.* God's being merciful, shews, that a man's sins are pardonable. But there is a great deal of difference between sins pardonable and sins pardoned; thy sins may be pardonable, yet not pardoned. Though God be merciful, yet who is God's mercy for? Not for the presuming sinner but the repenting sinner. Such as go on in sin, cannot lay claim to it. God's mercy is like the ark, none but the priests, might touch the ark; none but such as are spiritual priests, sacrificing their sins, may touch this ark of God's mercy.

2. Because Christ died for their sins, therefore they are forgiven.

*Ans.* That Christ died for remission of sin is true; but, that therefore all have remission is false; then Judas should be forgiven. Remission is limited to believers, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified;' but all do not believe: some slight and trample Christ's blood under foot, Heb. x. 29. So that, notwithstanding Christ's death, all are not pardoned. Take heed of this dangerous mistake. Who will seek after pardon, that thinks he hath it already?

*2d. Mistake,* That pardon is easy to be had; it is but a sigh, or Lord have mercy: but, how dearly hath pardon cost them who have obtained it? How long was it ere David's broken bones were set? Happy are we, if we have the pardon of sin sealed, though at the very last hour: but, why do men think pardon of sin so easy to be obtained? Their sins are but small, therefore venial. The devil holds the small end of the perspective glass before their eyes. But, *First*, There is no sin small, being against a Deity. Why is he punished with death that clips the king's coin, or defaceth his statue, but because it is an abuse offered to the person of the king? *Secondly*, little sins, when multiplied become great; a little sum when multiplied, comes to millions. What is less than a grain of sand, but, when the sand is multiplied what heavier? *Thirdly*, thy sins cost no small price. View thy sins in the glass of Christ's sufferings: Christ did veil his glory, lose his joy and pour out his soul an offering for the least sin. *Fourthly*, little sins unrepented of, will damn thee, as well as greater. Not only great rivers fall into the sea, but little brooks; not only greater sins carry men to hell, but lesser; therefore do not think pardon easy, because sin is small, beware of mistakes.

2. The second means for pardon of sin, is, see yourselves guilty ; come to God as condemned men, 1 Kings xx. 22. ' They put ropes upon their heads and came to the king of Israel.' Let us come to God in profound humility : say not thus, Lord, my heart is good, and my life blameless : God hates this. Lie in the dust, be covered with sackcloth ; say as the centurion, Mat. viii. 8. ' Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come, under my roof ;' I deserve not the least smile from heaven. ' This is the way for pardon.

3. The third means for pardon is, hearty confession of sin, Ps. xxxii. 5. ' I confessed my sin, and thou forgavest me.' Would we have God cover our sins, we must discover them, 1 John i. 9. ' If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive them.' One would have thought it should have run thus, if we confess our sins he is merciful to forgive them ; nay, but he is just to forgive them. Why just ? Because he hath bound himself by a promise to forgive an humble confessor of sin. *Cum accusat, excusat* ; Tertul. When we accuse ourselves, God absolves us. We are apt to hide our sins, Job xxxi. 33. Which is as great a folly as for one to hide his disease from the physician ; but when we open our sins to God by confessing, he opens his mercy to us by forgiving.

4. Means for pardon, found repentance : repentance and remission are put together, Luke xxiv. 47. There is a promise of a fountain opened for the washing away the guilt of sin, Zech. xiii. 1. But see what goes before, Zech. xii. 20. ' They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him,' Isa. i. 16. ' Wash ye, make ye clean ;' that is, wash in the waters of repentance ; and then follows a promise of forgiveness, ' though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.' It is easy to turn white into scarlet, but not so easy to turn scarlet into white : yet, upon repentance, God hath promised to make the scarlet sinner of a milk-white whiteness.

*Caution.* Not that repentance merits pardon, but it prepares for it. We set our seal on the wax when it melts : God seals his pardons on melting hearts.

5. Means, faith in the blood of Christ. It is Christ's blood washeth away sin, Rev. i. 6. But this blood will not wash away sin, unless it be applied by faith. The apostle speaks of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 2. Many are not pardoned, though Christ's blood be shed, because it is not sprinkles : now it is faith that sprinkles Christ's blood on the soul, for the remission of sin. As Thomas put his hands into Christ's sides, John xx. 27. So faith puts its hand into Christ's wounds, and takes of the blood and sprinkles it upon the conscience, for the washing away of guilt. Hence in scripture, we are said to obtain pardon through faith, Acts xiii. 39. ' By him

all that believe are justified,' Luke vii. 48. 'Thy sins are forgiven.' Whence was this, *ver* 56 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' O let us labour for faith : Christ is a propitiation or atonement to take away sin ; but how ? 'Through faith in his blood.' Rom. iii. 25.

6. Means, pray much for pardon, Hof. xiv. 2. 'Take away all iniquity,' Luke xviii. 13. 'The Publican smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.' And the text faith, 'He went away justified.' Many pray for health, riches, children ; but Christ hath taught us what to pray for chiefly, *Remitte nobis debita nostra* ; 'Forgive us our sins.' And be earnest suiters for pardon, consider what guilt of sin is ; it binds one over to the wrath of God ; better thy house were haunted with devils, than thy soul with guilt. He who is in the bond of iniquity, must needs be in the gall of bitterness, Acts viii. 23. A guilty soul wears Cain's mark, which was a trembling at the heart, and a shaking in his flesh ; guilt makes the sinner afraid, lest every trouble he meets with should arrest him, and bring him to judgment. If guilt be so dismal, and breed such convulsion-fits in the conscience, how earnest should we be in prayer, that God would remove this guilt, and so earnest, as to resolve to take no denial ! Plead hard with God for pardon, as a man would plead with a judge for his life. Fall upon thy knees, say, Lord, hear one word. Why may God say, what canst thou say for thyself, that thou shouldest not die ? Lord I can say but little, but I put in my surety, Christ will answer for me ; O look upon that blood which speaks better things than that of Abel ; Christ is my priest, his blood is my sacrifice, his divine nature is my altar. As Rahab was to shew the scarlet thread in the window, and when Joshua saw it, he did not destroy her, Josh. ii. 18, 21. and vi. 22, 23. So shew the Lord the scarlet thread of Christ's blood, and that is the way to have mercy. But, will God say, why should I pardon thee, thou hast nowise obliged me ? But, Lord pardon me, because thou hast promised it ; I urge thy covenant. When a man is to die by the law, he calls for his book ; so say, Lord let me have the benefit of my book : thy word faith, 'If the sinner forsake his evil way thou wilt pardon abundantly,' Isa. xliii. 25. Lord, I have forsaken my sin, let me therefore have mercy ; I plead the benefit of the book. But for whose sake should I pardon ? Thou canst not deserve it, Lord, for thy own name's sake : thou hast said, thou wilt blot out sin, for thy own name's sake, Isa. xliii. 25. 'It will be no eclipsing to thy crown : how will thy mercy shine forth, and all thy other attributes ride in triumph, if thou shalt pardon me ! Thus plead with God in prayer, and resolve not to give him over till thy pardon be sealed. God cannot deny importunity ; he delights in mercy. As the mother, faith Chry-

softom, delights to have her breast milked, so God delights to milk out the breast of mercy to the sinner. These means being used will procure this great blessedness, the forgiveness of sin. Thus I have done with the first part of this fifth petition, 'Forgive us our sins;' I come to the second part of the petition 'As we forgive our debtors.'



MATTH. vi. 12. *As we forgive our debtors: Or, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

I PROCEED to the second part of the petition, 'As we forgive them that trespass against us.'

*As we forgive.* This word, As, is not a note of equality, but similitude; not that we equal God in forgiving, but imitate him.

This great duty of forgiving others, is a crossing the stream; 'tis contrary to flesh and blood. Men forget kindnesses, but remember injuries. But it is an indispensable duty to forgive; we are not bound to trust an enemy; but we are bound to forgive him. We are naturally prone to revenge. Revenge (saith Homer) is sweet as dropping honey. The heathen philosophers held revenge lawful. *Ulcisci te laceffitus potes*, Cicero. But we learn better things out of the oracles of scripture, Mark xi. 25. 'When ye stand praying, forgive.' Mat. v. 44. Col. iii. 13. 'If a man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'

Qu. 1. *How can we forgive others, when it is only God forgives sin?*

Ans. In every breach of the second table, there are two things; an offence against God, and a trespass against man: so far as it is an offence against God, he only can forgive; but so far as it is a trespass against man, so we may forgive.

Qu. 2. *When do we forgive others?*

Ans. When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; if it be in our power to do our enemies mischief, we will not; we wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, we pray for them, we seek reconciliation with them, we shew ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them: this is gospel-forgiving.

Obj. 1. *But I have been much injured and abused, and to put it up will be a stain to my reputation.*

Ans. 1. To pass by an injury without revenge, is no eclipsing one's credit; the scripture saith, Prov. xix. 11. 'It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression.' 'Tis more honour to bury an injury, than revenge it: wrathfulness denotes weakness; a noble heroic spirit overlooks a petty offence.

2. Suppose a man's credit should be impaired with those whose censure is not to be valued ; yet consider the folly of challenging another to a duel, 'tis little wisdom for a man to redeem his credit by losing his life, and to run to hell to be counted valorous.

Obj. 2. *But the wrong he hath done me is great.*

Ans. But thy not forgiving him is a greater wrong ; he in injuring thee hath offended against a man, but thou in not forgiving him offendest against God.

Obj. 3. *But if I forgive one injury, I shall occasion more.*

Ans. If the more injuries thou forgiveest, the more thou meetest with, this will make thy grace shine the more. Often forgiving will add more to the weight of his sin, and to the weight of thy glory. If any say, I strive to excel in other graces, but as for this of forgiving, I cannot do it, I desire in this to be excused ; what dost thou talk of other graces ? the graces are *inter se connexæ*, linked and chained together ; where there is one, there is all : he that cannot forgive, his grace is counterfeit, his faith is fancy, his devotion is hypocrisy.

Qu. 3. *But suppose another hath wronged me in my estate, may not I go to law for my debt ?*

Ans. Yes, else what use were there of law-courts ? God hath set judges to decide cases in law, and to give every one his right. It is with going to law, as it is with going to war ; when the just rights of a nation are invaded, here it is lawful to go to war : so, when a man's estate is trespassed upon by another, he may go to law to recover it. But the law must be used in the last place, when no entreaties or arbitrations will prevail, then the chancery must decide it. Yet this is no revenge, it is not so much to injure another, as to right one's self ; this may be, yet one may live in charity.

Use 1. Here is a bill of indictment against such as study revenge, and cannot put up the least discourtesy. They would have God forgive them, but they will not forgive others : they will pray, come to church, give alms ; but, as Christ said, Mark x. 21. ' Yet lackest thou one thing ; ' they lack a forgiving spirit, they will rather want forgiveness from God, than they will forgive their brother. How sad is it, that, for every slight wrong, or disgraceful word, men should let malice boil in their hearts ? would there be so many duels, arrests, murders, if men had the art of forgiving ? Revenge is the proper sin of the devil ; he is no drunkard, or adulterer, but this old serpent is full of the poison of malice : and what shall we say to them who make profession of religion, yet, instead of forgiving, pursue others spitefully ? it was prophesied, the ' wolf should dwell with the lamb,' Isa. xi. 6. But what shall we say, when such as profess to be lambs become wolves ; These open the mouths of the

profane against religion ; they will say, these are as full of rancour as any. O whither is love and mercy fled ? If the Son of man did come, should he find charity on the earth ? I fear but little. Such as but cherish anger and malice in their hearts, and will not forgive, how can they pray, ' Forgive us, as we forgive others ? ' Either they must omit this petition (as Chrysostom saith, some did in his time) or else they pray against themselves.

*Use 2.* Let it persuade us all, as ever we hope for salvation, to pass by petty injuries and discourtesies, and labour to be of forgiving spirits, Col. iii. 13. ' Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.'

Herein we resemble God. He is ready to forgive, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. He befriends his enemies ; he opens his hand to relieve them, who open their mouths against him. It was Adam's pride to go to resemble God in omniscience : but here it is lawful to resemble God in forgiving enemies : this is a God-like disposition ; and what is godliness but God-likeness ?

2. To forgive is one of the highest evidences of grace. When grace comes into the heart, it makes a man, as Caleb, of another spirit, Numb. xiv. 24. It makes a great metamorphosis, it sweetens the heart, and fills it with love and candour. When a scion is grafted into a stock, it partakes of the nature and sap of the tree, and brings forth the same fruit ; take a crab, graft it into a pepin, it brings forth the same fruit as the pepin ; so he who was once of a sour crabby disposition, given to revenge, when he is once ingrafted into Christ, he partakes of the sap of this heavenly olive, and bears sweet and generous fruit : he is full of love to his enemies, and requites good for evil. As the sun draws up many thick noxious vapours from the earth, and returns them in sweet showers : so a gracious heart returns the unkindnesses of others, with the sweet influences of love and mercifulness, Psal. xxxv. 13. ' They rewarded me evil for good : but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting.' This is a good certificate to shew for heaven.

3. The blessed example of our Lord Jesus ; he was of a forgiving spirit : his enemies reviled him, but he did pity them, their words were more bitter than the gall and vinegar they gave him, but Christ's words were smoother than oil ; they spat upon him, pierced him with the spear and nails, but he prayed for them, ' Father, forgive them : ' he wept over his enemies, he shed tears for them that shed his blood : never such a pattern of amazing kindness. Christ bids us learn of him, Mat. xi. 29. he doth not bid us learn of him to work miracles, but he would have us learn of him to forgive our enemies. If we do not imitate Christ's life, we cannot be saved by his death.

4. The danger of an implacable unforgiving spirit : it hinders the efficacy of ordinances ; it is like an obstruction in the body, which keeps it from thriving. A revengeful spirit poisons our sacrifice ; our prayers are turned into sin : will God receive prayer mingled with this strange fire ? Our coming to the sacrament is sin, we come not in charity ; so that ordinances are turned into sin. It were sad if all the meat one did eat should turn to poison ; malice poisons the sacramental cup, men eat and drink their own damnation : Judas came to the passover in malice, and after the sop Satan entered, John xiii. 27.

5. God hath tied his mercy to this condition, if we do not forgive, neither will he forgive us, Mat. vi. 15. ‘ If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.’ A man may as well go to hell, for not forgiving, as for not believing. How can they expect mercy from God, whose bowels are shut up, and are merciless to their trespassing brethren ? James ii. 13. ‘ He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. I cannot forgive, said one, though I go to hell.

6. The examples of the saints, who have been of forgiving spirits. Joseph forgave his brethren, though they put him into a pit, and sold him, Gen. 1. 21. ‘ Fear not, I will nourish you, and your little ones.’ Stephen prayed for his persecutors. Moses was of a forgiving spirit ; how many injuries and affronts did he put up ; The people of Israel dealt unkindly with him, they murmured against him at the waters of Marah, (the water was not so bitter as their spirits) but he fell to prayer for them, Exod. xv. 25. ‘ He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet.’ When they wanted water, they fell a-chiding with Moses, Exod. xvii. 3. ‘ Why hast thou brought us out of Egypt, to kill us with thirst ?’ As if they had said, if we die, we will lay our death to thy charge ; here was enough to have made Moses call for fire from heaven upon them, but he passeth by this injury, and, to shew he forgave them, he becomes an intercessor for them, *ver.* 4. and set the rock a broach for them, *ver.* 5. The prophet Elijah feasted his enemies, 2 Kings vi. 23. he prepared a table for them who would have prepared his grave. Cranmer was famous for forgiving injuries. When Luther had reviled Calvin, *Etiamsi milies me diabolus vocet* ; Though he call me a devil a thousand times, yet I will love and honour him as a precious servant of Christ. When one had abused and wronged a Christian, asking him what wonders hath your master Christ wrought ? saith he, he hath wrought this wonder, that though you have so injured me, yet I can forgive you, and pray for you.

7. Forgiving and requitting good for evil, is the best way to



conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. Saul having pursued David with malice, and hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains, yet David would not do him mischief when it was in his power. David's kindness melted Saul's heart, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. 'Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, 'Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good.' This forgiving is heaping coals, which melts the enemy's heart, Rom. xii. 20. This is the most noble victory, to overcome an enemy without striking a blow, to conquer him with love. Philip of Macedonia, when it was told him that one Nicanor did openly rail against him, the king instead of putting him to death, sent him a rich present; which did so overcome the man, and made his heart relent, that he went up and down to recant what he had said against the king, and did highly extol the king's clemency.

8. Forgiving others is the way to have forgiveness from God, and is a sign of forgiveness.

(1.) It is the way to have forgiveness, Matth. vi. 14. 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' But one would think other things should sooner procure forgiveness from God, than our forgiving others: no surely, nothing like this to procure forgiveness; for all other acts of religion may have leaven in them. God forbade leaven in the sacrifice, Exod. xxxiv. 25. One may give alms, yet there may be the leaven of vain glory in this; the Pharisees sounded a trumpet, they did not give alms, but fell them for applause, Matth. vi. 2. One may give his body to be burned, yet there may be leaven in this, it may be a false zeal; there may be leaven in many acts of religion, which sours the whole lump: but to forgive others that have offended us, this can have no leaven in it, no sinister aim; this is a duty wholly spiritual, and is done purely out of love to God; hence it is, God rather annexeth forgiveness to this than to the highest and most renowned works of charity, which are so cried up in the world.

(2.) It is a sign of God's forgiving us. It is not a cause of God's forgiving us, but a sign: we need not climb up into heaven, to see whether our sins are forgiven; let us look into our hearts, and see if we can forgive others. Then we need not doubt but God hath forgiven us; our loving others is nothing but the reflection of God's love to us: Oh therefore, by all these arguments, let us be persuaded to the forgiving others. Christians, how many offences hath God passed by in us? our sins are innumerable and heinous: is God willing to forgive us so many offences, and cannot we forgive a few? No man can do so much wrong to us all our life, as we do to God in one day.

*Qu. But how must we forgive?*

*Ans.* As God forgives us.

1. Cordially. God doth not only make a shew of forgiveness, and keep our sins by him ; but doth really forgive, he passeth an act of oblivion, Jer. xxxi. 34. So we must not only say, we forgive, but do it with the heart, Mat. xviii. 35. ‘ If ye from your hearts forgive not.’

2. God forgives fully ; he forgives all our sins. He doth not for fourscore write down fifty, Pl. ciii. 3. ‘ Who forgiveth all thy iniquities.’ Hypocrites pass by some offences, but retain others. Would we have God deal so with us to remit only some trespasses, and call us to account for the rest ?

3. God forgives often ; we run afresh upon the score, but God multiplies pardon, Isa. lvii. 7. Peter asks the question, Matth. xviii. 21. ‘ Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? Till seven times ? Jesus saith to him, I say not, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven.’ If he say, I repent, you must say, I remit.

Qu. *But this is one of the highest acts of religion, flesh and blood cannot do it : how shall I attain to it ?*

Ans. 1. Let us consider, how many wrongs and injuries we have done against God : what volume can hold our *errata* ? Our sins are more than the sparks in a furnace.

2. If we would forgive, see God’s hand in all that men do or say against us. Did we look higher than instruments, our hearts would grow calm, and we should not meditate revenge. Shimei reproached David and cursed ; David looked higher, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. ‘ Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.’ What made Christ, that when he was reviled he reviled not again ? He looked beyond Judas and Pilate, he saw his Father putting the bitter cup into his hand : and as we must see God’s hand in all the affronts and incivilities we receive from men, so we must believe God will do us good by all, if we belong to him, 2 Sam. xvi. 12. ‘ It may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.’ *Quisquis detraxit famæ meæ addet mercedi meæ*, Aug. He that injures me shall add to my reward ; he that clips my name to make it weigh lighter, shall make my crown weigh heavier. Well might Stephen pray for his enemies, ‘ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,’ Acts vii. 60. He knew they did but increase his glory in heaven ; every stone his enemies threw at him, added a pearl to his crown.

3. Lay up a stock of faith, Luke xvii. 4. ‘ If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.’ And the apostle said to the Lord, ‘ increase our faith ;’ as if they had said, We can never do this without a great deal of faith ; Lord, increase our faith. Believe God hath pardoned

you, and you will pardon others; only faith can throw dust upon injuries, and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness.

4. Think how thou hast sometimes wronged others; and may it not be just with God that the same measure you mete to others, should be measured to you again? Hast thou not wronged others, if not in their goods, yet in their name? If thou hast not borne false witness against them, yet perhaps thou hast spoken falsely of them: the consideration of this may make Christians bury injuries in silence.

5. Get humble hearts. A proud man thinks it a disgrace to put up an injury. What causeth so many duels and murders but pride? ‘Be clothed with humility,’ Pet. v. 5. He who is low in his own eyes, will not be troubled much though others lay him low: he knows there is a day coming, where there shall be a resurrection of names as well as bodies, and God will avenge him of his adversaries, Luke xviii. 7. ‘And shall not God avenge his own elect?’ The humble soul leaves all his wrongs to God to requite, who hath said, ‘Vengeance is mine,’ Rom. xii. 19.

*Use, of comfort.* Such as forgive, God will forgive them. You have a good argument to plead with God for forgiveness. Lo, I am willing to forgive him who makes me no satisfaction, and wilt not thou forgive me who hast received satisfaction in Christ my surety. So ends the fifth petition.

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## OF THE SIXTH PETITION IN THE LORD’S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

THIS petition consists of two parts. *First*, Deprecatory, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ *Secondly*, Petitory, ‘but deliver us from evil.’

*First*, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ Doth God lead into temptation? God tempts no man to sin, James i. 13. ‘Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God tempteth not any man.’ God doth permit sin, but doth not promote it. He who is an encourager of holiness cannot be a patron of sin. God doth not tempt to that which he hath an antipathy against. What king will tempt his subjects to break those laws which he himself hath established.

Qu. *But is it not said, God tempted Abraham?* Gen. xxii. 1.

Ans. Tempting there was no more than trying. God tried Abraham’s faith, as a goldsmith tries gold in the fire: but there

is a great deal of difference between God's trying his people's grace and exciting their corruption; he trieth their grace, but doth not excite their corruptions: man's sin cannot be justly father'd on God. God tempts no man.

Qu. *What then is the meaning of this, 'Lead us not into temptation?'*

Ans. When we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation;' the meaning is, we desire of God, that he would not suffer us to be overcome by temptation. That we may not be given up to the power of temptation, which is when we are trepanned into sin.

Qu. 2. *Whence do temptations come?*

Ans. 1. *Ab intra*, from ourselves. The heart is *fomes peccati*, the bearer of all evil. Our own hearts are the greatest tempters: *quisque sibi Satan est*, James i. 14. 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.' The heart is a perfect decoy.

2. Temptations come *ab extra*, from Satan. He is called the Tempter, Mat. iv. 3. he lies in ambush to do us mischief; *stat in procinctu diaboli*, the devil lays a train of temptation to blow up the fort of our grace: the devil is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail: the world is his diocese where he visits; we are sure to find Satan, whatever we are doing, reading, praying, meditating: we find him within, how he came there we know not; we are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it. A saint's whole life (saith Austin) is a temptation. Elias, who could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation. This is a great molestation to a child of God; as it is a trouble to a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted. The more one is tempted to evil, the more he is hindered from good: we are in great danger of Satan the 'prince of the air;' and we had need often pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' That we may see in what danger we are of Satan's temptations.

Consider, (1.) His malice in tempting. This hellish serpent is swelled with the poison of malice. Satan envies man's happiness: to see a clod of dust so near to God, and himself (once a glorious angel) cast out of the heavenly paradise, this makes him pursue mankind with inveterate hatred, Rev. xii. 12. 'The devil is come down to you having great wrath.' If there be any thing this infernal spirit of hell can delight in, it is to ruin souls, and bring them into the same condemnation with himself. This malice of Satan in tempting must needs be great, if we consider three things:

1. That when Satan is so full of *torment*, yet, that at such a time he should tempt. One would think that Satan should scarce have a thought free from thinking of his own misery;

yet such is his rage and malice, that, when God is punishing him, he is tempting.

2. Satan's malice is great, that he will tempt where he knows he cannot prevail: he will put forth his sting, though he cannot hurt. He tempted Christ, Matth. iv. 3. 'If thou be the Son of God.' He knew well enough Christ was God as well as man, yet he would tempt him. Such was his malice against Christ, that he would put an affront upon Christ, though he knew he could not conquer him. He tempts the elect to blasphemy: he knows he cannot prevail against the elect; yet such is his malice, that though he cannot storm the garrison of their hearts, yet he will plant his pieces of ordinance against them.

3. Satan's malice is great, that though he knows his tempting men to sin will increase his own torment in hell, yet he will not leave off tempting: every temptation makes his chain heavier, and his fire hotter, yet he will tempt. Therefore Satan being such a malicious revengeful spirit, had we not need pray that God would not suffer him to prevail by his temptations? 'Lead us not into temptation.'

(2.) Consider Satan's diligence in tempting, 1 Pet. v. 8. 'He walketh about.' He neglects no time; he who would have us idle, yet he himself is always busied. This lion is ever hunting after his prey, he compasseth sea and land to make a proselyte: he walks about, he walks not as a pilgrim, but a spy; he watcheth where he may throw in the fire ball of a temptation. He is a restless spirit; if we repulse him, yet he will not desist, but come again with a temptation. Like Marcellus, a Roman captain Hannibal speaks of, whether he was conquered, or did conquer, he was never quiet. More particularly, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this.

1. If he gets the least advantage by temptation he pursues it to the utmost. If his motion to sin begins to take, he follows it close, and presseth to the act of sin. When he tempted Judas to betray Christ, and found that Judas was inclinable, and began to bite at the bait of thirty pieces of silver, he hurries him on, and never leaves him till he had betrayed his Lord and Master. When he had tempted Spira to renounce his religion, and saw Spira begin to yield, he follows his temptation close, and never left till he had made him go to the legate at Venice, and there abjure his faith in Christ.

2. Again, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this, the variety of temptations he useth. He doth not confine himself to one sort of temptation, he hath more plots than one: if he finds one temptation doth not prevail, he will have another: if he cannot tempt to lust, he will tempt to pride: if a temptation to covetousness doth not prevail, he will tempt to profaneness: if he cannot fright men into despair, he will see if he can

draw them to presumption : if he cannot make them profane, he will see if he can make them formalists : if he cannot make them vicious, he will tempt them to be erroneous. He will tempt them to leave off ordinances ; he will pretend revelations. Error damns as well as vice ; the one pistols, the other poisons : thus Satan's diligence in tempting is great, he will turn every stone, he hath several tools to work with ; if one temptation will not do, he will make use of another. Had not we need then to pray, ' Lead us not into temptation ?'

3. Consider Satan's power in tempting. He is called, ' the prince of the world,' John xii. 31. and the ' strong man,' Luke xi. 21. and the ' great red dragon,' who ' with his tail cast down the third part of the stars,' Rev. xii. 4. He is full of power, being an angel ; though Satan hath lost his holiness yet not his strength. The devil's power in tempting is seen several ways : 1. He, is a spirit having an intellectual being, can convey himself into the fancy and poison it with bad thoughts. As the Holy Ghost doth cast in good motions, so the devil doth bad, he puts it into Judas' heart to betray Christ, John xiii. 2. Satan, though he cannot compel the will, yet he can present pleasing objects to the senses, which have a great force in them. He set a ' wedge of gold' before Achan, and so enticed him with that golden bait. 3. The devil can excite and stir up the corruption within, and work some inclinableness in the heart to embrace the temptation : thus he stirred up corruption in David's heart, and provoked him to number the people, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Satan can blow the spark of a lust into a flame.

4. Herein lies much of his power, that he being a spirit, can so strangely convey his temptations into our minds, that we cannot easily discern whether they come from Satan, or from ourselves : whether they are his suggestions, or the natural births of our own hearts. A bird may hatch the egg of another bird, thinking it is her own : often we hatch the devil's motions, thinking they come from our own hearts. When Peter dissuaded Christ from suffering, sure Peter thought it came from the good affection, which he did bear to his master, Matt. xvi. 22. little did Peter think Satan had a hand in it. Now, if the devil hath such a power to insil his temptations, that we hardly know whether they be his or ours, we are in a great deal of danger, and had need pray, not to be led into temptation. Here, I know, some are desirous to move the question.

Qu. *How shall we perceive when a motion comes from our own hearts, and when from Satan ?*

Ans. It is hard (as Bernard saith) to distinguish *inter morbum serpentis & morbum mentis*, between those suggestions which

come from Satan, and which breed out of our own hearts. But I conceive there is this threefold difference.

1. Such motions to evil as come from our own hearts, spring up more leisurely, and by degrees; a sin is long concocted in the thoughts, ere consent be given; but usually we may know a motion comes from Satan by its suddenness; therefore a temptation is compared to a dart, Eph. vi. 15. because it is shot suddenly. David's numbering the people was a motion which the devil did inject suddenly.

2. The motions to evil which come from our own hearts are not so terrible; few are frightened at the sight of them, as children; but motions coming from Satan are more ghastly and frightful, as motions to blasphemy and self-murder. Hence it is temptations are compared to fiery darts, Eph. vi. for their terribleness, because they do, as flashes of fire, startle and affright the soul.

3. When evil thoughts are thrown into our mind, when we loathe, and have reluctancy against; when we strive against them, and flee from them, as Moses did from the serpent, this shews they are not the natural birth of our own heart, but the hand of Joab is in this. Satan hath injected these impure motions.

4. Satan's power in tempting appears by the long experience he hath gotten in the art; he hath been a tempter, well nigh as long as he hath been an angel. Who are fitter for action than men of experience? who is fitter to steer a ship than an old experienced pilot? Satan hath gained much experience, by his being so long versed in the trade of tempting. He having such experience, knows what are the temptations which have foiled others, and are most likely to prevail: the fowler lays those snares which have caught other birds. Satan having such power in tempting, we are in danger, and had need pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

5. Consider Satan's subtilty in tempting. The Greek word to tempt, signifies to deceive. Satan in tempting, useth many subtil policies to deceive; we read of the depths of Satan, Rev. ii. 24. and devices and stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. we read of his snares and his darts: he is called a lion for his cruelty, and an old serpent for his subtilty; he hath several sorts of subtilty in tempting.

1<sup>st</sup>, Subtilty. The devil observes the natural temper and constitution, *Omnium discutit mores*.—The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself. As the husbandman knows what seed is proper to sow in such a soil; so Satan finding out the temper, knows what temptation is proper to sow in such a heart. That way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows; Satan tempts

the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold. He provides favoury meat, such as the sinner loves.

2d, Subtility. Satan chooseth the fittest season to tempt in. As a cunning angler casts in his angle when the fish will bait best; the devil can hit the very joint of time when a temptation is likeliest to prevail. There are several seasons he tempts in.

1st, In our first initiation and entrance into religion, when we have newly given up our names to Christ. Satan will never disturb his vassals: but when we have broke his prison in conversion, now he pursues us with violent temptations. *Solet inter primordia conversionis acrius insurgere*, Bern. When Israel were got a little out of Egypt, then Pharaoh pursues them. Herod, as soon as Christ was born, sent to destroy him; so when the child of grace is newly born the devil labours to strangle it with temptation. When the first buddings and blossoms of grace begin to appear, the devil would nip these tender buds with the sharp blasts of his temptations. Indeed, at first conversion, grace is so weak, and temptation so strong, that one would wonder how the young convert escapes with his life: Satan hath a spite at the new creature.

2d, *Season*. The devil tempts when he finds us idle, and unemployed. We do not sow seed in fallow ground; but Satan sows most of his seed in a person that lies fallow. When the fowler sees a bird sit still and perch upon the tree now he shoots it; so when Satan observes us to sit still, now he shoots his fiery darts of temptation at us, Mat. xiii. 25. 'While men slept, the enemy sowed tares;' so, while men slept in sloth, Satan sows his tares. When David was walking on the leads, and unemployed, now the devil set a tempting object before him, and it prevailed, 2 Sam. xi. 3.

3d, *Season*. When a person is reduced to outward wants and straits, now is the devil's tempting time. When Christ had fasted forty days and was hungry, then the devil comes and tempts him with the glory of the world, Matth. iv. 8. When provisions grow short, now Satan sets in with a temptation; What, wilt thou starve rather than steal? reach forth thy hand, pluck the forbidden fruit. How oft doth this temptation prevail? how many do we see, who, instead of living by faith, live by their thifts, and will steal the venison, though they lose the blessing.

4th, *Season*. Satan tempts after an ordinance. When we have been at hearing of the word, or prayer, or sacrament; now Satan casts in the angle of temptation. 'When Christ had been fasting and praying, then came the tempter,' Matth. iv. 3.

Qu. *Why doth Satan choose this time to tempt in, after an*



*ordinance ? one would think this were the most disadvantageous time for now the soul is raised up to an heavenly frame ?*

*Ans.* 1. Malice puts Satan upon it. The ordinances that cause fervour in a saint, cause fury in Satan. He knows in every duty we have a design against him ; in every prayer we put up a suit in heaven against him ; in the Lord's supper, we take the sacrament upon it, to fight under Christ's banner against the devil ; therefore now Satan is more enraged, he now lays his snares, and shoots his darts against us.

2. Satan tempts after an ordinance, because he thinks he shall now find us more secure. After we have been at the solemn worship of God, we are apt to grow remiss, and leave off former strictness ; like a soldier, that after the battle leaves off his armour : now Satan watcheth his time ; he doth as David did to the Amalekites, after they had taken the spoil, and were secure, they did eat and drink, and dance ; now David fell upon them, and did smite them, 1 Sam. xxx. 17. So when we grow remiss after an ordinance, and perhaps too much indulge ourselves in carnal delights, now Satan falls upon us by a temptation, and oft foils us. As after a full meal, men are apt to grow drowsy ; so after we have had a full meal at an ordinance, we are apt to flumber and grow secure, and now Satan shoots his arrow of temptation, and hits us between the joints of our armour.

*5th, Season.* Satan tempts after some discoveries of God's love. Satan, like a pirate, sets on a ship that is richly laden ; so when a soul hath been laden with spiritual comforts, now the devil will be shooting at him to rob him of all. The devil envies to see a soul feasted with spiritual joy. Joseph's party-colored coat made his brethren envy him, and plot against him. After David had the good news of the pardon of his sin (which must needs fill him with consolation) Satan presently tempted him to a new sin in numbering the people : and so all his comfort leaked out, and was spilt.

*6th, Season.* Satan tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest ; as the sons of Jacob came upon the Shechemites when they were sore, and could make no resistance, Gen. xxxiv. 25. At two times Satan comes upon us in our weakness.

(1.) When we are alone ; so he came to Eve when her husband was away, and she the less able to resist his temptation. Satan hath this policy, he gives his poison privately, when no body is by ; others may discover his treachery. Satan is like a cunning suiter, that wooes the daughter when the parents are from home ; so, when one is alone, and none near, now the devil comes a wooing with a temptation, and hopes to have the match struck up.

(2.) When the hour of death approaches. As the poor sheep when it is sick and weak and can hardly help itself, now the crows lie picking at it ; so, when a saint is weak on his death-bed, now the devil lies picking at him with a temptation ; he reserves his most furious assaults till the last. The people of Israel were never so fiercely assaulted, as when they were going to take possession of the promised land ; then all the kings of Canaan combined their forces against them ; so, when the saints are leaving the world, and going to set their foot on the heavenly Canaan, now Satan sets upon them by temptation ; he tells them, they are hypocrites ; all their evidences are counterfeit. Thus, like a coward, he strikes the saints when they are down ; when death is striking at the body, he is striking at the soul. This is his second subtilty, Satan chooseth the fittest season when to throw in a temptation.

3. *Subtlety*. A third subtil policy of Satan in tempting, is, he baits his hook with religion ; the devil can hang out Christ's colours, and tempt to sin under pretences of piety. Now he is the white devil, and transforms himself into an angel of light. Celsus wrote a book full of error, and he entitled it, *liber veritatis*, the book of truth. So Satan can write the title of religion upon his worst temptation. He comes to Christ with scripture in his mouth, ' it is written,' &c. So he comes to many, and tempts them to sin, under the pretence of religion ; he tempts to evil, that good may come of it ; he tempts men to such unwarrantable actions, that they may be put into a capacity of honouring God the more. He tempts them to accept of preferment against conscience, that hereby they may be in a condition of doing more good : he put Herod upon killing John Baptist, that hereby he might be kept from the violation of his oath. He tempts many to oppression and extortion, telling them, they are bound to provide for their families. He tempts many to make away with themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God : thus he wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a divine, and quotes scripture.

4. *Subtlety* of Satan is, to tempt to sin gradually. The old serpent winds himself in by degrees, he tempts first to lesser sins, that so he may bring on greater. A small offence may occasion a great crime ; as a little prick of an artery may occasion a mortal gangrene. Satan first tempted David to an impure glance of the eye, to look on Bathsheba ; and that unclean look occasioned adultery and murder. First the devil tempts to go into the company of the wicked, then to twist into a cord of friendship, and so, by degrees, to be brought into the same condemnation with them ; this is a great subtilty of Satan, to tempt to

leſſer ſins firſt ; for theſe harden the heart, and fit men for the committing of more horrid and tremendous ſins.

5. *Subtily*. Satan's policy is to hand over temptations to us, by thoſe whom we leaſt ſuſpect.

1. By near friends ; he tempts us by them who are near in blood. He tempted Job by a proxy, he handed over a temptation to him, by his wife, Job ii. 9. ' Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity ? ' As if he had ſaid, Job, thou ſeeſt how, for all thy religion, God deals with thee ; his hand is gone out ſore againſt thee : what, and ſtill pray, and weep ? Caſt off all religion, turn atheiſt : ' curſe God, and die.' Thus ſatan made uſe of Job's wife to do his work : the woman was made of the rib, and Satan made a bow of this rib, out of which he ſhot the arrow of his temptation. *Per coſtam petit cor*. The devil oft ſtands behind the curtain, he will not be ſeen in the buſineſs, but puts others to do his work. As a man makes uſe of a ſerjeant to arreſt another ; ſo Satan makes uſe of a proxy to tempt : as he did creep into the ſerpent, ſo he can creep into a near relation.

2. He tempts ſometimes by religious friends ; the devil keeps ſtill out of ſight, that his cloven foot may not be ſeen. Who would have thought to have found the devil in Peter ? When he diſſuaded Chriſt from ſuffering, maſter, ' ſpare thyſelf ; ' Chriſt ſpied Satan in the temptation, ' Get thee behind me, Satan.' When our religious friends would diſſuade us from doing our duty, Satan is a lying Spirit in their mouths, and would by them entice us to evil.

6. *Subtily*. Satan tempts ſome perſons more than others : ſome are like wet tinder, who will not ſo ſoon take the fire of temptation as others. Satan tempts moſt where he thinks his policies will more eaſily prevail ; ſome are fitter to receive the impreſſion of temptations, as ſoft wax is fitter to take the ſtamp of the ſeal. The apoſtle ſpeaks of ' veſſels fitted for deſtruction,' Rom. ix. 22. ſo there are veſſels fitted for temptation. Some, like the ſponge, ſuck in Satan's temptations. There are five ſorts of perſons that Satan doth moſt fit brooding upon by his temptations.

1ſt, *Ignorant perſons*. The devil can lead them into any ſnare ; you may lead a blind man any whither. God made a law, that the Jews ſhould not put a ſtumbling-block in the way of the blind, Lev. xix. 14. Satan knows it is eaſy to put a temptation in the way of the blind, at which they ſhall ſtumble into hell. When the Syrians were ſmitten with blindneſs, the prophet Eliſha could lead them whether he would into the enemy's country, 2 Kings vi. 20. The bird that is blind is ſoon ſhot by the fowler. Satan, the god of this world, blinds men and then ſhoots them. An ignorant man cannot ſee the de-

vil's snares ; Satan tells him fuch a thing is no fin, or but a little one, and he will do well enough ; 'tis but repent.

2dly, Satan tempts unbelievers. He who, with Diagoras, doubts of Deity, or, with the Phocinians, denies hell : what fin will not this man be drawn to ? He is like metal that Satan can caſt into any mould ; he can dye him of any colour. An unbeliever will ſtick at no fin : luxury, perjury, injuſtice. Paul was afraid of none ſo much as them that did not believe, Rom. xv. 31. ' That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.'

3dly, Satan tempts proud perſons ; theſe he hath more power of : None is in greater danger of falling by a temptation, than he who ſtands high in his own conceit. When David's heart was lifted up in pride, then the devil ſtirred him up to number the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 2. *Celſae graviore caſu decidunt turres, feriuntque ſummos fulmina montes*, Hor. Satan made uſe of Haman's pride to be his ſhame.

4thly, *Melancholy perſons*. Melancholy is *atra bilis*, a black humour, ſeated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy clothes the mind in ſable, it doth diſturb reaſon ; Satan doth work much upon this humour. There are three things in melancholy, which gives the devil great advantage ; (1.) It unfits for duty, it pulls off the chariot-wheels, it diſpirits a man. Lute-ſtrings when they are wet will not ſound ; when the ſpirit is ſad and melancholy, a Chriſtian is out of tune for ſpiritual actions. (2.) Melancholy ſides often with Satan againſt God ; the devil tells ſuch a perſon, God doth not love him, there is no mercy for him ; and the melancholy ſoul is apt to think ſo too, and ſets his hand to the devil's lies. (3.) Melancholy breeds diſcontent, and diſcontent is a cauſe of many ſins, unthankfulneſs, impatience, and oft it ends in ſelf-murder. Judge then what an advantage Satan hath againſt a melancholy perſon, and how eaſily he may prevail with his temptations. A melancholy perſon tempts the devil to tempt him.

6thly, *Idle perſons*. He who is idle, the Devil will find him work to do. Jerom gave his friend this counſel, To be ever well employed, that when the tempter came, he might find him working in the vineyard. If the hands be not working, the head will be plotting ſin, Micah. ii. 1.

7. *Subtility* of Satan is, to give ſome little reſpite, and ſeem to leave off tempting a while, that he may come on after with more advantage. As Iſrael made as if they were beaten before the men of Ai, and fled ; but it was a policy to draw them out of their fenced cities, and enſnare them by an ambuſh, Joſh. viii. 15. The devil ſometimes raiſeth the ſiege, and feigns a flight, that he may the better obtain the victory. He goes away for a time, that he may return when he ſees a better ſea-

son, Luke xi. 24. 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks in dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith I will return to mine house whence I came out.' Satan, by feigning a flight, and leaving off tempting a while, causeth security in persons, and they think they are safe, and are become victors; when, on a sudden, Satan falls on, and wounds them. As one that is going to leap, runs back a little, that he may take the greater jump; Satan seems to retire and run back a little, that he may come on again with a temptation more furiously and successfully: therefore we need always to watch and have on our spiritual armour.

*S. Subtlety* of the old serpent is, either to take men off from the use of means, or to make them miscarry in the use of means.

*First*, He labours to take men off from duty, from praying and hearing; his design is to discourage them: and, to do that, he hath two artifices;

1. He discourageth them from duty, by suggesting to them their unworthiness; they are not worthy to approach to God, or have any signals of his love and favour. They are sinful, and God is holy, how dare they presume to bring their impure offering to God? This is a temptation indeed. That we should see ourselves unworthy, is good, and argues humility; but to think we should not approach to God because of unworthiness, is a conclusion of the devil's making. God saith, Come, though unworthy; by this temptation, the devil takes many off from coming to the Lord's table. O (saith he) this is a solemn ordinance, and requires much holiness; how darest thou so unworthily come, lest thou eat and drink unworthily? Thus, as Saul kept the people from eating honey, so the devil by this temptation, fears many from this ordinance which is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

2. Satan endeavours to discourage from duty, by objecting want of success. When men have waited upon God in the use of ordinances, and yet find not that comfort they desire: now Satan disheartens them, and puts them upon resolves of declining all religion; they begin to say as that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. 'Why should I wait on the Lord any longer?' When Saul saw God answered him not by dreams and visions, Satan tempted him to leave God's worship, and seek to the witch of Endor, 1 Sam. xviii. 6. No answer of prayer comes, therefore, saith Satan, leave off praying: who will sow seed where no crop comes up? Thus the devil would, by his subtil logic, dispute a poor soul out of duty. But if he sees he cannot prevail this way, to take men off from the use of means, then he labours,

*Secondly*, To make them miscarry in the use of means. By

this artifice he prevails over multitudes of professors. The devil stands as he did at Joshua's right-hand, to resist men, Zech. iii. 2. If he can't hinder them from duty, he will be sure to hinder them in duty, two ways.

1<sup>st</sup>, By causing distraction in the service of God ; and this he doth by proposing objects of vanity, or by whispering in men's ears, that they can scarce mind what they are doing.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Satan hinders, by putting men upon doing duties in a wrong manner. 1. In a dead formal manner, that so they may fail of the success. Satan knows duties done superficially were as good to be left undone. That prayer which doth not pierce the heart, will never pierce heaven. 2. He puts them upon doing duties for wrong ends. *Finis specificat actionem* ; he will make them look a-squint, and have by-ends in duty, Matth. vi. 5. ' Be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Prayer is good, but to pray to be seen of men, this was the dead fly in the box of ointment ; the oil of vain-glory feeds their lamp : sinister aims corrupt and fly-blow our holy things. Here is Satan's policy, either to prevent duty, or pervert it ; either to take men off from the use of means, or make them miscarry in the use of means.

9. *Subtily*. Satan can colour over sin with the name and pretence of virtue. Alcibiades hung a curtain curiously embroidered over a foul picture or satyrs ; so Satan can put the image of virtue over the foul picture of sin. Satan can cheat men with false wares ; he can make them believe, that presumption is faith, that intemperate passion is zeal, revenge is prudence, covetousness is frugality, and prodigality good hospitality. ' Come, see my zeal for the Lord,' saith Jehu. Satan persuaded him it was a fire from heaven, when it was nothing but the wild-fire of his own ambition ; it was not zeal but state-policy. This is a subtle art of Satan, to deceive by tempting, and put men off with the dead child, instead of the live child ; to make men believe that is a grace, which is a sin ; as if one should write balm-water upon a glass of poison. If Satan hath all these subtil artifices in tempting, are we not in great danger from this prince of the air ? and had we not need often pray, ' Lord, suffer us not to be led into temptation ? As the serpent beguiled Eve with his subtily, 2 Cor. xi. 2. let us not be beguiled by the snares and policies of this hellish Machiavel.

Satan hath a dexterity in subtle contrivances ; he doth more hurt as a fox, than a lion ; his snares are worse than his darts, 2 Cor. ii. 11. ' We are not ignorant of his devices.'

10. The next *subtily* of Satan is, he labours to ensnare us

by lawful things, in *licitis perimus omnes* ; more are hurt by lawful things, than unlawful, as more are killed with wine than poison : gross sins affright, but how many take a surfeit and die, in using lawful things inordinately ? Recreation is lawful ; eating and drinking are lawful, but many offend by excess, and their table is a snare. Relations are lawful, but how oft doth Satan tempt to over-love ? how oft is the wife and child laid in God's room ? excess makes things lawful become sinful.

11. *Subtily* of Satan is, to make the duties of our general and particular calling hinder and jumble out one another. Our general calling is serving God, our particular calling is minding our employments in the world. It is wisdom to be regular in both these, when the particular calling doth not eat out the time for God's service, nor the service of God hinder diligence in a calling. The devil's art is to make Christians defective in one of these two : some spend all their time in hearing, reading, and under a pretence of living by faith, do not live in a calling ; others Satan takes off duties of religion, under a pretence that they must provide for their families ; he makes them so careful for their bodies that they quite neglect their souls. This is the subtily of the old serpent, to make men negligent in the duties either of the first table or the second.

12. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to misrepresent true holiness, that he may make others out of love with it. He paints the face of religion full of scars, and with seeming blemishes, that he may create in the minds of men prejudice against it. Satan represents religion as the most melancholy thing, and that he who embraceth it, must banish all joy out of his diocels ; though the apostle saith, ' Joy in believing,' Rom. xv. 13. Satan suggests that religion exposeth men to danger ; he shews them the cross, but hides the crown from them : he labours to put all the disgrace he can upon holiness, that he may tempt men to the renouncing of it. Satan abuseth the good Christian, and gives him a wrong name ; the truly zealous man, Satan calls hot-headed and factious : the patient man, that bears injuries without revenge, Satan represents him as a coward ; the humble man is low-spirited ; the heavenly man Satan calls fool, he lets go things that are seen, for things that are not seen ; thus the devil misrepresents religion to the world. As John Huss, that holy man, was painted with red devils ; so Satan paints holiness with as deformed, misshapen a face as he can, that he may by this temptation, draw men off from solid piety, and make them rather scorn than embrace it. The hand of Joab is in this : Satan is tempting persons to atheism, to cast off all religion.

13. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to draw men off from

the love of the truth to embrace error, 2 Theff. ii. 11. ‘ That they should believe a lie.’ Satan is called, in scripture, not only an unclean spirit, but a lying spirit. As an unclean spirit, so he labours to defile the soul with lust; and as a lying spirit so he labours to corrupt the mind with error: and indeed this is dangerous, because many errors do look so like the truth, as alchymy represents true gold. Satan thus beguiles souls. Though the scripture blames heretics for being the promoters of error; yet it chargeth Satan with being the chief contriver of it. They spread the error, but the devil is a lying spirit in their mouths. This is Satan’s great temptation: he makes men believe such are glorious truths, which are dangerous impostures; thus he transforms himself ‘ into an angel of light.’ What is the meaning of Satan’s sowing tares in the parable, Mat. xiii. 25. but Satan’s sowing error instead of truth? How quickly had the devil broached false doctrine in the apostles’ times, That it was necessary to be circumcised, Acts xv. 1. that angel-worship was lawful, and that Christ was not yet come in the flesh? 1 John iv. 3. Now the devil tempts by drawing men to error, because he knows how deadly his snare is, and the great mischief error will do when it comes. 1. Error is of a spreading nature; it is compared to leaven, because it sours, Mat. xvi. 11. and to gangrene, because it spreads, 2 Tim. ii. 17. (1.) One error spreads into more like a circle in the water, that multiplies into more circles; one error seldom goes alone. (2.) Error spreads from one person to another; It is like the plague, which infects all round about. Satan, by infecting one person with error, infects more: the error of Pelagius did spread on a sudden to Palestine, Africa, Italy: the Arian error was at first but a single spark, but at last it set almost all the world on fire. 2. The devil lays this snare of error, because error brings divisions into the church; and divisions bring an opprobrium and scandal upon the ways of God. The devil danceth at discord: division destroys peace which was Christ’s legacy: and love, which is the bond of perfection. Not only Christ’s coat hath been rent, but his body, by the divisions which error hath caused. In churches or families where error creeps in, what animosities and factions doth it make? it sets the father against the son, and the son against the father. What slaughters and bloodsheds have been occasioned by errors broached in the church? 3. The devil’s policy in raising errors, is to hinder reformation; the devil was never a friend to reformation. In the primitive times, after the apostles’ days, the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, Rev. xii. 15. Which was a deluge of heresies, that so he might hinder the progress of the gospel. 4. Satan tempts to error, because error devours godliness. The Gnostics, as Epiphanius observes, were not only corrupted in



their judgments, but in their morals; they were loose in their lives, Jude 4. 'Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' The Familists afterwards turned ranters, and gave themselves over to vices and immoralities; and this they did, boasting of the spirit and perfection. 5. The devil's design in seducing by error, is, he knows error is pernicious to souls. Error damns, as well as vice; poison kills as well as pistol. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 'They shall privily bring in damnable heresies.' Now, if Satan be thus subtil in laying snares of error to deceive, had not we need pray that God would not suffer us to be led into temptation; that he would make us wise to keep out of the snares of error, or, if we have fallen into it, that he would give us to recover out of the snare by repentance?

14. Another *subtlety* of Satan is, to bewitch and ensnare men, by setting pleasing baits before them; the riches, pleasures, honours of the world, Mat. iv. 9. 'All this will I give thee.' How many doth Satan tempt with this golden apple? Pride, idleness, luxury, are the three worms which breed of plenty, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.' Satan kills with these silver darts: how many surfeit on luscious delights? The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down mens' souls. His policy is to tickle them to death, to damn them with delights. The flesh would fain be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation; he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure, such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares. We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be 'led into temptation.' We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity, as a man hath to be careful at a feast, where there are some poisoned dishes of meat.

15. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to plead necessity. Satan's policy in tempting men under a plea of necessity is this, he knows that necessity may in some cases seem to palliate and excuse a sin. It may seem to make a lesser evil good to avoid a greater, as Lot offered to expose his daughters to the Sodomites, and was willing that they should defile them, that he might preserve the angel strangers that were come into his house, Gen. xix. 8. Doubtless Satan had a hand in this temptation, and made Lot believe that the necessity of this action would excuse the sin. The tradesman pleads a necessity of unlawful gain, else he cannot live; another pleads a necessity of revenge, else his credit would be impaired: thus Satan tempts men to sin, by telling them of the necessity. Nay, the devil will quote scripture for it, that in some cases extraordinary, there may be a necessity of doing that which is not justifiable: did not David, in case of necessity, 'eat the shew bread, which was not lawful

for him, but only the priests?' Mat. xii. 4. Nor do we read he was blamed; then will Satan say, why may not you in cases extraordinary trespass a little, and take the forbidden fruit? O beware of this temptation, see Satan's cloven foot in it: nothing can warrant a thing in its own nature sinful; necessity will not justify impiety.

16. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to draw men to presumption. Presumption is a confidence without ground: it is made up of two ingredients, audacity and security; this temptation is common. There is a twofold presumption: (1.) Satan tempts men to presume of their own hearts, that they are better than they are; they presume they have grace, when they have none, they will not take gold on trust, but they will take grace upon trust; the foolish virgins presumed that they had oil in their vessels when they had none. Here that rule of Epicharmus is good, "distrust a fallacious heart." (2.) Satan tempts men to presume of God's mercy: though they are not so good as they should be, yet God is merciful. They look upon God's mercy with the broad spectacles of presumption. Satan soothes men up in their sins; he preacheth to them "all hope, no fear;" and so he deludes them with these golden dreams. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendant ad inferos*, Aug. Presumption is Satan's draw-net, by which he drags millions to hell: Satan by this temptation, oft draws the godly to sin; they presume upon their privileges, or graces, and so venture on occasions of sin. Jehoshaphat twisted into a league of amity with king Ahab, presuming his grace would be antidote strong enough against the infection, 2 Chron. xviii. 3. Satan tempted Peter to presume upon his own strength: and when it came to a trial, he was foiled, and came off with shame. We had therefore need pray, 'that we may not be led into this temptation;' and with David, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins,' Psal. xix. 13.

17. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to carry on his designs against us under the highest pretences of friendship: he thus puts silver upon his bait, and dips his poisoned pills in sugar. Satan doth, as some courtiers, make the greatest pretences of love, where they have the most deadly hatred. Joab's sword was ushered in with a kiss; 'He kissed Abner, and then smote him under the fifth rib.' Satan puts off his lion's skin, and comes in sheep's cloathing: he pretends kindness and friendship: he would consult what might be for our good. Thus Satan came to Christ, 'Command that these stones be made bread,' Matth. iv. As if he had said to Christ, I see thou art hungry, and there is no table spread for thee in the wilderness; I therefore, pitying thy condition, wish thee to get something to eat, turn stones to bread, that thy hunger may be satisfied;

but Christ spied the temptation, and with the sword of the Spirit wounded the old serpent. Thus Satan came to Eve, and tempted her under the notion of a friend; eat, saith he, of the forbidden fruit; for the Lord knows, that 'in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods.' as if he had said, I persuade you only to that which will put you into a better condition than now you are; eat of this tree, and it will make you omniscient, 'ye shall be as gods.' What a kind devil was here? But it was a subtil temptation, she greedily swallowing the bait, it undid her and all her posterity. Let us fear his fallacious flatteries. *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.*

18. *Subtility* is, when Satan hath tempted men to sin, he persuades them to keep his counsel: like them that have some foul disease, they will rather die than tell the physician. It were wisdom, in case of sore temptation, to open one's mind to some experienced Christian, whose counsel might be an antidote against the temptation: but the danger of a temptation lies in the concealing of it; it is like the concealing of temptation, which may prove mortal. How had we need renew this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation?'

19. *Subtility* of Satan in tempting is, to make use of fit tools and engines, for the carrying on of his work; that is, he makes use of such persons as may be likely means to promote his tempting designs. The devil lays the plot of a temptation, and as it were cuts out the work, and then he employs others to finish it.

(1.) Satan makes use of such as are in places of dignity. Men of renown, he knows, if he can get these on his side, they may draw others into snares: when the princes and heads of the tribes joined with Korah, they presently drew a multitude into the conspiracy, Numb. xvi. 2, 10.

(2.) The Devil makes use of such to carry on his tempting designs, as are men of wit and parts; such as, if it were possible, should deceive the very elect. He must have a great deal of cunning that shall persuade a man to be out of love with his food: the devil can make use of such heretical spirits as shall persuade men to be out of love with the ordinances of God, which they profess they have found comfort in. Many who once seemed to be srick frequentors of the house of God, are now persuaded, by Satan's cunning instruments, to leave off all, and follow an *ignus fatuus*, the light within them. This is a great subtilty of the devil, to make use of such cunning, subtletized men, as may be fit to carry on his tempting designs.

(3.) Satan makes use of bad company to be instruments of tempting; they draw youth to sin. First they persuade them to come into their company, then to twist into a cord of friend-

ship, then to drink with them ; and, by degrees, debauch them. These are the devil's decoys, to tempt others.

20. *Subtlety* of Satan is, he in his temptation, strikes at some grace more than others : as in tempting, he aims at some persons more than others ; so he aims at some grace more than others ; and if he can prevail in this, he knows what an advantage it will be to him. If you ask what grace it is that Satan in his temptations doth most strike at ? I answer, it is the grace of faith : he lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of our faith, *Fidei scutum percutit*. Why did Christ pray more for Peter's faith, than any other grace ? Luke xxii. 32. Because Christ saw that his faith was most in danger, the devil was striking at this grace. Satan, in tempting Eve, did labour to weaken her faith, Gen. iii. 1. ' Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ? ' The devil would persuade her, that God had not spoken truth ; and when he had once wrought her to distrust, then she took of the tree. 'Tis called *scutum fidei*, ' the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16. Satan in tempting, strikes most at our shield, he assaults our faith. True faith, though it cannot be wholly lost, yet it may suffer a great eclipse ; though the devil cannot by temptation take away the life of faith, yet he may the lively acting ; he cannot *gratiam diruere*, but he may *debilitare*.

Qu. *But why doth Satan in tempting chiefly set upon our faith ?* Ans. 1 Kings. xxii. 31. ' Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.' So faith is as it were the king of the graces : it is a royal princely grace, and puts forth the most majestic and noble acts, therefore Satan fights chiefly with this kingly grace. I shall shew you the devil's policy in assaulting faith most.

1<sup>st</sup>, Because this is the grace doth Satan most mischief ; it makes the most resistance against him, 1 Pet. v. 9. ' Whom resist, steadfast in faith.' No grace doth more bruise the serpent's head than faith. Faith is both a shield and a sword, defensive and offensive. (1.) It is a shield : a shield guards the head, defends the vitals ; the shield of faith causeth that the fiery darts of temptation do not pierce us through. (2.) Faith is a sword, it wounds the red dragon.

Qu. *How comes faith to be so strong, that it can resist Satan, and put him to flight ?*

Ans. 1. Because faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul ; Samson's strength lay in his hair, ours lies in Christ. If a child be assaulted, it runs and calls to its father for help ; so, when faith is assaulted, it runs and calls Christ, and in his strength overcomes.

2. Faith furnishes itself with store of promises ; the promises are faith's weapons to fight with. Now, as David by five stones

in his sling, wounded Goliath, 2 Sam. xvii. 40. so faith puts the promises, as stones, into its sling, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5. 'He will not break the bruised reed,' Matth. xii. 20. 'He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet,' Rom. xvi. 20. 'None shall pluck you out of my Father's hands,' John x. 29. Here are five promises, like five stones, put in the sling of faith, and with these a believer wounds the red dragon. Now faith being such a grace, that doth so resist and wound Satan, he will watch his opportunity that he may batter our shield, though he cannot break it.

*2dly*, Satan strikes most at our faith, and would weaken and destroy it, because faith hath a great influence upon all the other graces; faith sets all the graces a-work. Like some rich clothier, that gives out a stock of wool to the poor, and sets them all a-spinning; so faith gives out a stock to all the other graces, and sets them a-working. Faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith which worketh by love.' When once the soul believes God's love, this kindles love to God.

The believing martyrs burned hotter in love than in fire. Faith sets repentance a-work. When the soul believes there is mercy to be had, and that this mercy is for him, this sets the eyes a-weeping, O, faith the soul, that ever I should offend such a gracious God! Repenting tears drop from the eye of faith, Mark ix. 23. 'The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe.' Faith sets his eyes abroad with tears; therefore the devil hath most spite at faith, and by his temptations would undermine it, because it is such an operative grace, it sets all the other graces on work. If the devil cannot destroy our faith, yet if he can disturb it, if he can hinder and stop the actings of faith, he knows all the other graces will be lame and unactive. If the spring in a watch be stopped, it will hinder the motion of the wheels: if faith be down, all the other graces are at a stand.

21. Subtlety of Satan in tempting, is, in broaching those doctrines that are flesh-pleasing. Satan knows the flesh loves to be gratified, it cries out for ease and liberty; it will not endure any yoke, unless it be lined and made soft. The devil will be sure so to lay his bait of temptation, as to please and humour the flesh. The word faith, 'Strive as in an agony' to enter into glory; crucify the flesh; take the kingdom of heaven by holy violence: now Satan, to enervate and weaken these scriptures, comes with temptations and flatters the flesh; he tells men, there needs no such strictness: why so much zeal and violence? a softer pace will serve? sure there is an easier way to heaven: there needs no breaking the heart for sin: do

but confess to a priest, or tell over a few beads, or say some Ave Marias and this will procure you a pardon, and give you admission into paradise. Or, the devil can go another way to work; if he sees men startle at popery, then he stirs up the flattering Antinomian, and he comes in another disguise, and saith, What needs all this cost? what needs repenting tears? these are legal. What need you be so strict in your obedience? Christ hath done all for you, you may make use of your Christian liberty: this temptation draws many away; it takes them off from strictness of life. He who sells cheapest shall have most customers; the devil knows this is a cheap easy doctrine, which will please the flesh, and he doth not doubt but he shall have customers enough.

-22. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting, is, in reference to holy duties. His policy is either to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty.

I. To hinder from duty, as 1 Thess. ii. 18. 'I would have come once and again, but Satan hindered me.' So many duties of religion had been performed, but Satan hindered. The hand of Joab is in this. There are three duties which the devil is an enemy to, and labours to keep us from.

1. *Meditation*. He will let men profess, or pray and hear in a formal manner; this doth him no hurt, nor them no good; but he doth oppose meditation, as being a means to compose the heart and make it serious. Satan can stand your small shot, if you do not put in this bullet: he cares not how much you hear, nor how little you meditate. Meditation is a chewing of the cud, it makes the word digest, and turn to nourishment; meditation is the bellows of the affections; the devil is an enemy to this. When Christ was alone in the wilderness, giving himself to divine contemplations, then the devil comes and tempts him, to hinder him. He will thrust in worldly business, something or other to keep men off from holy meditation.

2. *Duty*, which Satan, by tempting, would keep us from, is mortification. This is as needful as heaven, Col. iii. 5. 'Mortify your members which are upon earth, uncleanness, inordinate affection.' Satan will let men be angry with sin, exchange sin, restrain sin, which is keeping sin prisoner, that it doth not break out; but when it comes to the taking away the life of sin, Satan labours to stop the warrant, and hinder the execution. When sin is mortifying, Satan is crucifying.

3. *Self-examination*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine yourselves:' a metaphor from metal, that is pierced through, to see if it be gold within. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition set up in one's soul: a man must search his heart for sin, as one would search a house for a traitor: or, as Israel sought for leaven to

burn it. Satan, if it be possible, will by his temptations, keep men from this duty ; he useth a great deal of subtilty.

(1.) Here, first he tells them their estate is good, and what need they put themselves to the trouble of examination ? Though men will not take their money on trust, but will examine it by the touch-stone, yet Satan persuades them to take their grace on trust. The devil persuaded the foolish virgins, they had oil in their lamps.

(2.) Satan hath another policy, he will shew men the faults of others, to keep them from searching their own : see what a proud covetous man goes there. He will allow them spectacles to see what is amiss in others, but not a looking-glass to behold their own faces, and see what is amiss in themselves.

II. Satan's policy is to discourage us in duty. When one hath been about the performing of holy duties, then the devil stands up and tells him, he hath played the hypocrite ; he hath served God for a livre : he hath had sinister ends : his duties have been full of distraction ; they have been fly-blown with pride : he hath offered the blind and lame, and can he expect a reward from God ? Satan tells a Christian, he hath increased his sin by prayer ; and, by this temptation, he would make a child of God quite out of conceit with his duties, he knows not whether he had best pray or not.

III. Or *thirdly*, If this plot will not take, Satan labours by temptation to put a Christian on too far in duty : if he cannot keep a child of God from duty, he will run him on too far in it. For instance, humiliation and mourning for sin is a duty, but Satan will put one on too far in it ; thou art not (saith he) humbled enough ; and indeed Satan never thinks a man is humbled enough, till he despair. He would make a Christian wade so far in the waters of repentance, that he should wade beyond his depth, and be drowned in the gulph of despair. Satan comes thus to the soul, Thy sins have been great, and thy sorrow should be proportionable to thy sins. But is it so ? canst thou say thou hast been as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner ? thou didst for many years drive no other trade but sin, and is a drop of sorrow enough for a sea of sin ? No ; thy soul must be more humbled, and lie steeping longer in the brinish waters of repentance. Satan would have a Christian weep himself blind, and in desperate mood throw away the anchor of hope. Now, lest any here be troubled with this temptation, let me say this, this is a mere fallacy of Satan : for sorrow proportionable to sin is not attainable in this life, nor doth God expect it. It is sufficient for thee (Christian) if thou hast a gospel-sorrow ; if thou grievest so far as to see sin hateful, and Christ precious : if thou grievest so as to break off iniquity ; if thy remembrance in divorce, this is to be humbled enough. Then the gold

hath lain long enough in the fire, when the dross is purged out? then a Christian hath lain long enough in humiliation, when the love of sin is purged out; this is to be humbled enough to divine acceptance. God, for Christ's sake, will accept of this sorrow for sin; therefore let not Satan's temptations drive to despair. You see how subtil an enemy he is, to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty, that he may run them upon the rock of despair. Had we not then need (having such a subtil enemy) pray 'Lord, lead us not into temptation?' As the serpent beguiled Eve, let us not be beguiled by this hellish Machiavel.

23. *Subtility* of Satan in tempting to the act of sin, is the hopes of returning out of it by speedy repentance. But this is a fallacy: it is easy for the bird to fly into the snare, but it is not easy to get out of the snare. Is it so facile a thing to repent? are there no pangs in the new birth? is it easy to leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? how many has Satan flattered into hell by this policy, that if they sin, they may recover themselves by repentance? Alas! is repentance in our power? a spring-lock can shut of itself, but it cannot open without a key: we can shut of ourselves to God, but we cannot open by repentance, till God open our heart, who hath the key of David in his hand.

24. *Subtility* of Satan in tempting, is, to put us upon doing that which is good unseasonably.

(1.) To mourn for sin is a duty; the sacrifices of God are a broken heart, Psalm li. 17. But yet there is a time when it may not be so seasonable: after some eminent deliverance, which calls for rejoicing, now to have the spirits dyed of a sad colour, and to sit weeping, is not seasonable. There was a special time at the feast of tabernacles, when God called his people to cheerfulness, Deut. xvi. 15. 'Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast to the Lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice.' Now, if at this time, the Israelites had hung their harps upon the willows, and been disconsolate, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding. When God by his providence calls us to thanksgiving, and we sit drooping, and, with Rachel, refuse to be comforted, this is very evil, and favours of ingratitude. This is Satan's temptation; the hand of Joab is in this.

(2.) To rejoice is a duty, Psalm xxxiii. 1. 'Praise is comely for the upright.' But when God, by his judgments, calls us to weeping, now joy and mirth are unseasonable, Isa. xxii. 12. 'In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness.'

Oecolampadius, and other learned writers, think it was in the time of king Ahaz, when the signs of God's anger, like a



blazing star, did appear : now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable.

3. To read the word is a duty, but Satan will sometimes put men upon it when it is unseasonable. To read it at home when God's word is preaching, or the sacrament administering, is unseasonable, yea sinful, as Hushai said, 2 Sam. xvii. 7. 'The counsel is not good at this time.' There was a set time enjoined for the passover, when the Jews were to bring their offering to the Lord, Numb ix. 2. Had the people been reading the law at home in the time of the passover, it had not been in season, and God would have punished it for a contempt. This is the devil's subtil temptation, either to keep us from duty, or to put us upon it, when it is least in season. Duties of religion not well timed, and done in season, are dangerous. Snow and hail are good for the ground when they come in their season ; but in harvest ; when the corn is ripe, then a storm of hail would do hurt.

25. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting, is, to persuade men to delay their repenting and turning to God. He saith, as Hag. i. 2. 'The time is not yet come.' Now youth is budding, or you are but in the flower of your age, it is too soon to repent, 'The time is not yet come.' This temptation is the devil's draw-net, by which he draws millions to hell : it is a dangerous temptation. Sin is *dulce venenum*, Bern. a poison ; the longer poison lies in the body, the more mortal : by delay of repentance, sin strengthens, and the heart hardens. The longer ice freezeth, the harder it is to be broken : The longer a man freezeth in impenitency, the more difficult it will be to have his heart broken. When sin hath gotten a haunt, it is not easy shaken off. Besides, the danger of this temptation to delay repentance, appears in this, because life is hazardous, and may on a sudden expire. What security have you that you shall live another day ? Life is made up of a few flying minutes ; it is a taper soon blown out, Jam. iv. 14. 'What is your life it is but a vapour.' The body is like a vessel, tuned with a little breath ; sickness broacheth this vessel, death draws it out : how dangerous therefore is this temptation, to procrastinate and put off turning to God by repentance ! Many now in hell did propose to repent, but death surprized them.

26. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to infringe and weaken the saint's peace. If he cannot destroy their grace, he will disturb their peace. Satan envies a Christian should have a good day ; and if he cannot keep them from heaven, he will keep them from an heaven upon earth. There is nothing (next to holiness) a Christian prizeth more, than peace and tranquility of mind : this is the cream of life, a bunch of grapes by the way. Now, it is Satan's great policy to shake a Christian's

peace ; that, if he will go to heaven, he shall go thither through frights and plenty of tears. The devil throws in his fire-balls of temptation, to set the saints' peace on fire. Of such great concern is spiritual peace, that no wonder if Satan would by his intricate subtilties, rob us of this jewel.

Spiritual peace is a token of God's favour. As Joseph had a special testimony of his father's kindness in the party-coloured coat he gave him : so have the saints a special token of God's good will to them, when he gives them inward peace, which is, as it were, the party-coloured coat to wear. No wonder then, if Satan so much rage against the saints' peace, and would tear off this comfortable robe from them.

The devil troubles the waters of the saints' peace, because hereby he hopes to have the more advantage of them.

(1.) By this perplexing of their spirits. Satan takes off their chariot wheels ; unfits them for the service of God : body and mind are both out of temper, like an instrument out of tune. Sadness of spirit prevailing, a Christian can think of nothing but his troubles ; his mind is full of doubts, fears, surmises, so that he is like a person distracted and he is scarce himself ; either he neglects the duties of religion, or his mind is taken off from them while he is doing them. Especially there is one duty that melancholy and sadness of spirit unfits for, and that is thankfulness. Thankfulness is a tribute or quit-rent due to God, Ps. cxlix. 3. ' Let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouth.' But when Satan hath disturbed a Christian's spirit, and filled his mind full of black, and almost despairing thoughts, how can he be thankful ? It rejoiceth Satan to see how his plot takes : by making God's children unquiet, he makes them unthankful,

(2.) Satan, by troubling the saints' peace, hath this advantage of laying a stumbling-block in the way of others ; by this policy, the devil gets an occasion to render the ways of God unlovely to those who are looking heaven-ward. He sets before new beginners, the perplexing thoughts, the tears, the groans of them who are wounded in spirit, to scar them quite off from all seriousness in religion. He will object to new beginners. Do you not see how these sad souls torture themselves with melancholy thoughts, and will you change the comforts and pleasures of this life to sit always in the house of mourning ? will you espouse that religion, which makes you a terror to yourselves, and a burden to others ? can you be in love with such a religion, as is ready to fright you out of your wits ? This advantage the devil gets by troubling the saints' peace, he would discourage others who are looking towards heaven ; he would beat them off from prayer, and hearing all soul-awakening ser-

mons, lest they fall into this black humour of melancholy, and end their days in despair.

(3.) By this subtil policy of Satan, in disturbing the saints' peace, and making them believe God doth not love them, he hath his advantage, he sometimes so far prevails over them, as to make them begin to entertain hard thoughts of God. Through the black spectacles of melancholy, God's dealings look sad and ghastly. Satan tempts the godly to have strange thoughts of God; to think he hath cast off all pity, and hath forgotten to be gracious, Ps. lxxvii. and to make sad conclusions, Isa. xxxviii. 13. 'I reckoned, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day, even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.' The devil setting in with melancholy, causeth a sad eclipse in the soul; it begins to think God hath shut up the springs of mercy, and there is no hope. Hereupon Satan getteth further advantage of a troubled spirit; sometimes he puts the troubled soul upon sinful wishes and execrations against itself; Job, in distemper of mind, cursed his birth-day, Job iii. 3. Job, though he did not curse his God, yet he cursed his birth-day. Thus you see what advantages the devil gets by raising storms, and troubling the saints' peace; and let me tell you, if the devil is capable of any delight, it is to see the saints' disquiets; their groans are his music; 'tis a sport to him to see them torture themselves upon the rack of melancholy, and almost drown themselves in tears. When the godly have unjust surmises of God, question his love, deny the work of grace, and fall to wishing they had never been born; now Satan is ready to clap his hands, and shout for a victory.

Having shewn you the advantages the devil gets by this temptation of disturbing the saints' peace, I shall answer a question. *By what arts and methods doth Satan, in tempting, disturb the saints' peace?*

*Ans.* (1.) Satan slyly conveys evil thoughts, and then makes a Christian believe they come from his own heart. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack, but it was of Joseph's putting in; so a child of God oft finds atheistical, blasphemous thoughts in his mind, but Satan hath cast them in. The devil doth, as some, lay their children at another's door; so Satan lays his temptations at our door, fathers them upon us, and then we trouble ourselves about them, and nurse them, as if they were our own.

(2.) Satan disturbs the saints' peace, by drawing forth their sins in the most black colours, to affright them, and make them ready to give up the Ghost. Satan is called the accuser of the brethren; not only because he accuseth them to God, but accuseth them to themselves; he tells them, they are guilty of such sins, and they are hypocrites; whereas the sins of a be-

liever shew only that grace is not perfect, not that he hath no grace. When Satan comes with this temptation, shew him that scripture, 1 John i. 7. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.’

27. *Subtility* of Satan is, by plausible arguments, to tempt men to be *felo de se*, to make away themselves. This temptation doth not only cross the current of scripture, but is abhorrent to nature to be one’s own executioner : yet such cunning artifices doth Satan, that he persuades many to lay violent hands upon themselves, which the bills of mortality witness. (1.) He tempts some to do this in terror of conscience, telling them, All the hell they shall have is in their conscience, and death will give them present ease. (2.) He tempts others to make away themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God. (3.) Others he tempts to make away themselves that they may presently arrive at happiness; he tells them, the best of the saints desire heaven, and the sooner they are there the better.

Austin speaks of Cleombratas, who hearing Plato read a lecture of the immortality of the soul, and the joys of the other world, *se in praet cipitum dejecit*; threw himself down a steep precipice, or rock, and killed himself. This is Satan’s plot; but we must not break prison, by laying violent hands upon ourselves, but stay till God send and open the door. Let us pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ Still bear in mind that scripture, Exod. xx. 13. ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ *Clamitat in caelum vox sanguinis*—If we may not kill another, much less ourselves; and take heed of discontent, which often opens the door to self-murder.

Thus I have shewn you twenty-seven subtilties of Satan in tempting, so that you may the better know them, and avoid them.

There is a story of a Jew that should have poisoned Luther; but a friend sent to Luther the picture of this Jew, warning him to take heed of such a man, when he saw him; by which means he knew the murderer, and escaped his hands. I have told you the subtil devices of Satan in tempting; I have shewn you (as it were) the picture of him that would murder you: I beseech you, being forewarned, take heed of the murderer.

1st, *Use*. From this subtilty of Satan in tempting, let me draw two inferences.

1. It may administer matter of wonder to us how any soul is saved. How may we admire, that Satan, this Abaddon, or angel of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 11. this Apollyon, this soul-devourer, doth not ruin all mankind! What a wonder is it that some are preserved, that neither Satan’s hidden snares prevail, nor his fiery darts; that neither the head of the serpent, nor the paw of the lion destroys them? Sure it will be matter

of admiration to the saints, when they come to heaven, to think how strangely they came thither; that, notwithstanding all the force and fraud, the power and policy of hell, yet they should arrive safe at the heavenly port: this is through the safe conduct of Christ, the captain of our salvation; Michael is too hard for the dragon.

2. Is Satan so subtil? See then what need we have to pray to God for wisdom to discern the snares of Satan and strength to resist them: we cannot of ourselves stand against temptation; if we could, this prayer were needless, 'lead us not,' &c. Let us not think we can be too cunning for the devil, we can escape his wiles and darts. If David and Peter, who were 'pillars in God's temple,' fell by temptation, how soon should such weak reeds as we be blown down, did God leave us. Take Christ's advice, Mat. xxvi. 41. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'

Inference 3. See what the end of all Satan's subtilties in tempting is, he is a tempter, that he may be an accuser. He lays the plot, enticeth men to sin, and then brings in the indictment; as if one should make another drunk, and then complain of him to the magistrate for being drunk. The devil is first a tempter, and then an informer; first a liar, and then a murderer.

Having shewn you the subtilties of Satan in tempting, I shall answer two questions;

Qu. 1. *Why doth God suffer his saints to be so hurried and buffeted by Satan's temptations?*

Ans. The Lord doth it for many wise and holy ends.

(1.) He lets them be tempted to try them. The Hebrew word *nissa* in *pyhil*, signifies both to tempt and to try; temptation is a touchstone, to try what is in the heart; the devil tempts that he may deceive, but God lets us be tempted to try us. *Qui non tentatur non probatur*, Aug.

1. Hereby God tries our sincerity. Job's sincerity was tried by temptation; the devil told God that Job was an hypocrite, and served God only for a livery; but, saith he, 'touch him, (that is, let me tempt him) and then see if he will not curse thee to thy face?' Job i. 11. Well God did let the devil touch him by a temptation, yet Job remains holy, he worships God, and blesteth God, ver. 20, 21. Here Job's sincerity was proved; Job had fiery temptations, but he came out of the fire a golden Christian. 'Temptation is a touchstone of sincerity.'

2. By temptation God tries our love. The wife of Tigranes did never so shew her chastity and love to her husband, as when she was tempted by Cyrus, but did not yield; so, our love to God is seen in this, when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it; though the devil come as a serpent

subtilly, and offers a golden apple, yet we will not touch the forbidden fruit. When the devil shewed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, such was Christ's love to his Father, that he abhorred the temptation. True love will not be bribed. When the devil's darts are most fiery, a saint's love to God is most fervent.

3. By temptation, God tries our courage, Hof. vii. 11. 'Ephraim is a silly dove without an heart.' So it may be said of many, they are *ex corde*, without an heart; they have no heart to resist a temptation; no sooner doth Satan come with his solicitations, but they yield; like a coward, as soon as the thief approacheth, he delivers his purse; but he is a valorous Christian, that brandisheth the sword of the Spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The courage of the Romans was never more seen than when they were assaulted by the Carthaginians; the heroic spirit of a saint is never more seen than in a field-battle, when he is fighting with the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. *Fidei robor potest esse concussum, non excusum*, Tertul. This is one reason why God lets his people be tempted, that their metal may be tried, their sincerity, love, magnanimity; when grace is proved, the gospel is honoured.

2. God suffers his children to be tempted, that he may be kept from pride. *Quos non gula superavit*, Cypr. Pride crept once into the angels, and into the apostles, when they disputed 'which of them should be greatest;' and in Peter, 'though all men forsake thee, yet I will not,' as if he had had more grace than all the apostles. Pride keeps grace low, that it cannot thrive; as the spleen swells, so the other parts of the body consume; as pride grows, so grace consumes. God resists pride, and, that he may keep his children humble, he suffers them sometimes to fall into temptation, 2 Cor. xii. 7. 'Lest I should be exalted, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me:' when Paul was lifted up in revelations, he was in danger to be lifted up in pride: now came the messenger of Satan to buffet him; that was some sore temptation to humble him. The thorn in the flesh was to prick the bladder of pride; better is that temptation that humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud. Rather than a Christian should be proud, God lets him fall into the devil's hands a while, that he may be cured of his imposthume.

(3.) God lets his people be tempted, that they may be fitter to comfort others, who are in the same distress: they can speak a word in due season to such as are weary. St. Paul was trained up in the fencing-school of temptation, 2 Cor. ii. 11. And he was able to acquaint others with Satan's wiles and stratagems. A man that hath rid over a place where there are quick-sands,

is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way; he who hath been buffeted by Satan, and hath felt the claws of this roaring lion, is the fittest man to deal with one that is tempted.

(4.) God lets his children be tempted, to make them long more for heaven, where they shall be out of gun shot; there they shall be freed from the hissing of the old serpent. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he doth vex and molest the saints; he lays his snares, throws his fire-balls, but this is only to make the people of God long to be gone from hence, and that they may pray that they had 'the wings of a dove,' to fly away beyond Satan's temptations. God suffered Israel to be vexed with the Egyptians, that they might long the more to be in Canaan. Heaven is the *centrum*, a place of rest, *centrum quietativum*; no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle that soars aloft in the air, and sits perching upon the tops of high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of serpents: so, when believers are gotten above into the empyrean heaven, they shall not be stung with the old serpent. The devil is cast out of the heavenly paradise. Heaven is compared to an exceeding high mountain, Rev. xxi. 10. It is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot reach up to it. *Nullus ibi hostium metus, nullæ insidiæ demonum*, Bern.

The temptations here are to make the saints long till death found a retreat, and call them off the field where the bullets of temptation fly so thick, that they may receive a victorious crown. Thus I have answered this question, why God lets his dear servants be tempted.

Qu. 2. *What rocks of support are there, or what comfort for tempted souls?*

Ans. 1<sup>st</sup>, That it is not our case alone, but hath been the case of God's eminent saints, 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you but that which is common to man,' yea, to the best: men, Christ's lambs, which have had the ear-mark of election upon them, have been set upon by the world. Elijah that could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation, 1 Kings xix. 4. Job was tempted to curse God, Peter to deny Christ; hardly ever any saint hath got to heaven, but hath met with a lion by the way: *sicquem quam omnes sancti patiuntur nemo recusat*. Nay, Jesus Christ himself, though he was free from sin, yet not from temptation; we read of Christ's baptism, Mat. iii. and Mat. v. 1. 'Then was he led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' No sooner was Christ out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation; and if the devil would set upon Christ, no wonder if he set upon us. There was no sin in Christ, no powder for the devil's fire; temptation to Christ, was like a bur on a crystal-glass, which

glides off ; or like a spark of fire on a marble pillar, which will not stick ; yet Satan was so bold as to tempt Christ. This is some comfort, such as have been our betters, have wrestled with temptations.

2d. Rock of support that may comfort a tempted soul, is, that temptations (where they are burdens) evidence grace. Satan doth not tempt God's children, because they have sin in them, but because they have grace in them. Had they no grace, the devil would not disturb them : where he keeps possession all is in peace, Luke xi. 21. His temptations are to rob the saints of their grace. A thief will not assault an empty house but where he thinks there is treasure ; a pirate will not fit upon an empty ship, but one that is full fraught with spices and jewels ; so the devil most assaults the people of God, because he thinks they have a rich treasure of grace in their hearts, and he would rob them of that. What makes so many cudgels be thrown at a tree, but because there is so much fruit hanging upon it ? The devil throws his temptations at you, because he sees you have so much fruit of grace growing upon you. Though to be tempted is a trouble, yet to think why you are tempted is a comfort.

3d. Rock of support or comfort, is, that Jesus Christ is near at hand, and stands by us in all our temptations. Here take notice of two things.

1. Christ's sympathy in temptation. 2. Christ's succour in temptation.

(1.) Christ's sympathy in our temptations. *Nobis compatitur Christus.*

Heb. iv. 15. ' We have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Jesus Christ doth sympathize with us ; he is so sensible of our temptations, as if he himself lay under them, and did feel them in his own soul. As in music, when one string is touched all the rest sound, so Christ's bowels sound ; we cannot be tempted but he is touched. If you saw a wolf worry your child, would you not pity your child ? You cannot pity it so as Christ doth tempted ones. Christ had a fellow-feeling when he was upon earth, much more now in glory.

Qu. *But how can it stand with Christ's glory now in heaven, to have a fellow-feeling of our miseries and temptations ?*

Ans. This fellow-feeling in Christ ariseth not from an infirmity or passion, but from the mystical union between him and his members, Zech. ii. 8. ' He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.' Every injury done to a saint Christ takes as done to him in heaven ; every temptation is a striking at Christ, and he is touched with the feeling of our temptations.

(2.) Christ's succour in temptation. As the good Samaritan



first had compassion on the wounded man, there was sympathy, then he poured in wine and oil, there was succour, Luke x. 34. So when we are wounded by the red dragon, Christ is first touched with compassion, and then he pours in wine and oil, Heb. ii. 18. 'In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' The Greek word to succour [*bæthesai*] signifies to run speedily to one's help; so fierce is Satan, so frail is man, that Christ, who is God-man, runs speedily to his help. When Peter was ready to sink, and said, 'Lord save me,' Christ presently stretched forth his hand, and caught him; so when a poor soul is tempted, and cries to heaven for help, 'Lord save me,' Christ comes in with his auxiliary forces: *noſcit Chriſtus*, our Lord Jesus knows what it is to be tempted, therefore he is so ready to succour such as are tempted. It hath been an observation, that child-bearing women are more pitiful to others in their travails, than such women as are barren; so the Lord Jesus having been in travail by temptations and sufferings, is more ready to pity and succour such as are tempted.

Concerning Christ's succouring the tempted, consider two things; (1.) Christ's ability, (2.) His agility to succour.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, Christ's ability to succour, Heb. ii. 18. 'He is able to succour them that are tempted.' Christ is called Michael, Rev. xii. 7. which signifies "Who is like God." Tho' the tempted soul is weak, yet he fights under a good Captain, 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' When a tempted soul fights, Christ comes into the field as his second. Michael would be too hard for the dragon: when the devil lays the siege of a temptation, Christ can raise the siege when he pleases; he can beat through the enemy's quarters, and can so rout Satan, that he shall never be able to rally his forces any more. Jesus Christ is on the faint's side, and who would desire a better life-guard than omnipotency?

*2dly*, Christ's agility in succouring. As Christ is able to succour the tempted, so he will certainly succour them. Christ's power enables him, his love inclines him, his faithfulness engages him to succour tempted souls. This is a great comfort to a soul in temptation, he hath a succouring Saviour. As God did succour Israel in the wilderness among fiery serpents, they had the rock set abroad, the manna, the pillar of cloud, the brazen serpent, what was this but a type of God's succouring a poor soul in the wilderness of temptation, flung with the devil that fiery serpent? Alexander being asked how he could sleep so securely, when his enemies were about him, said, Antipater is awake, who is always vigilant. So when our tempting enemy is near us, Jesus Christ is awake, who is a wall of fire about us. There is a great deal of succour to the tempted in the

names given to Christ : as Satan's names may terrify, so Christ's names may succour. The devil is called *Apollyon*, the devourer, Rev. ix. 11. Christ is called a Saviour ; the devil is called the ' strong man,' Matth. xii. 29. Christ is called *El Gibbor*, the ' mighty God,' Isa. ix. 6. The devil is called the accuser, Rev. xii. 10. Christ is called the advocate, 1 John ii. 1. The devil is called the tempter, Mat. iv. 3. Christ is called the comforter, Luke ii. 25. The devil is called the prince of darkness. Christ is called the sun of righteousness. The devil is called the old serpent, Christ is called the brazen serpent that heals, John iii. 15.

Thus the very names of Christ have some succour in them for tempted souls.

Qu. *How, and in what manner, doth Christ succour them that are tempted ?*

Ans. Several ways :

1. Christ succours them, by sending his Spirit, whose work it is to bring those promises to their mind, which are fortifying, John xiv. 25. ' He shall bring all things to your remembrance.' The Spirit furnisheth us with promises, as so many weapons to fight against the old serpent, Rom. xvi. 20. ' The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet.' 1 Cor. x. 13. ' God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,' Gen. iii. 15. ' The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' We are oft in times of temptation, as a man that hath his house beset, and cannot find his weapons, he hath his sword and gun to seek : now, in this case, Christ sends his Spirit, and he brings things to our remembrance ; that helps us in our combat with Satan. The Spirit of Christ doth to one that is tempted, as Aaron and Hur did to Moses, they put a stone under him, and held up his hands, and then Israel prevailed ; so God's Spirit puts the promises under the hand of faith, and then a Christian overcomes the devil, that spiritual Amalek. The promise is to the soul, as the anchor is to the ship, which keeps it steady in a storm.

2. Christ succours them that are tempted by his blessed ' interceding for them.' When the devil is tempting, Christ is praying. That prayer Christ put up for Peter when he was tempted, extends to all his saints, Luke xxii. 32. Lord, faith Christ, it is my child that is tempted ; Father, pity him. When a poor soul lies bleeding of his wounds the devil hath given him, Christ presents his wounds to his Father, and in the virtue of those, pleads for mercy. How powerful must Christ's prayer needs be ? He is a favourite, John xi. 42. He is both an high priest and a son : if God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a Son. Besides Christ prays for nothing but what is agreeable to his Father's

will : if a king's son petitions only for that which his father hath a mind to grant, his suit will not be denied.

3. Christ succurs his people, by taking off the tempter. A shepherd, when the sheep begin to straggle, may set the dog on the sheep to bring it nearer the fold, but then he calls off the dog again ; God will take off the tempter, 1 Cor. 10. 13. ' He will with the temptation make a way to escape,' he will make an outlet. Christ will rebuke the tempter, Zech. iii. 2. ' The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' This is so small support, that Christ succours the tempted. The mother succours the child most when it is sick ; she sits by its bed-side, brings it cordials ; so, when a soul is most assaulted, it shall be most assisted.

Obj. *But I have dealt unkindly with Christ, and sinned against his love ; and sure he will not succour me, but let me perish in the battle ?*

Ans. Christ is a merciful high-priest, and will succour thee notwithstanding thy failings. Joseph was a type of Christ ; his brethren sold him away, and the ' irons entered into his soul : ' yet afterwards, when his brethren were ready to die in the famine, he forgot their injuries, and succoured them with money and corn ; ' I am faith he, Joseph your brother ; ' so will Christ say to a tempted soul, " I know thy unkindnesses, how thou hast distrusted my love, grieved my Spirit, but I am Joseph, I am Jesus, therefore I will succour thee, when thou art tempted."

4th Rock of support. The best man may be most tempted. A rich ship may be violently set upon by pirates : he who is rich in faith, yet may have the devil (that pirate) set upon them by his battering pieces. Job, an eminent saint, yet how fiercely was he assaulted ? Satan did smite his body, that he might tempt him, either to question God's providence, or quarrel with it. St. Paul was a chosen vessel, but how was this vessel battered with temptation ? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Obj. *But is it not said, ' He who is born of God the wicked one toucheth him not ? ' 1 John v. 16.*

Ans. It is not meant, that the devil doth not tempt him, but he toucheth him not, that is *toucheth lethally*, Cajetan, with a deadly touch, 1 John v. 16. ' There is a sin unto death.' Now Satan with all his temptations doth not make a child of God sin ' a sin unto death.' Thus he toucheth him not.

5th Rock of support. Satan can go no further in tempting than God will ' give him leave ; ' the power of the tempter is limited. A whole legion of devils could not touch one swine, till Christ gave them leave. Satan would have sifted Peter to have sifted out all his grace ; but Christ would not suffer him, ' I have prayed for thee,' &c. Christ binds the devil in a chain, Rev. xx. 1. If Satan's power were according to his malice, not

one soul should be saved ; but he is a chained enemy, this is a comfort, Satan cannot go a hair's breadth beyond God's permission. If an enemy could not touch a child further than the father did appoint, sure he should do the child no great hurt.

6th Rock of support. It is not the having a temptation makes guilty, but the giving consent ; we cannot hinder a temptation ; Elijah, that could by prayer shut heaven, could not shut out a temptation ; but if we abhor the temptation, it is our burden not our sin. We read in the old law, if one went to force a virgin, and she cried out, she was reputed innocent ; if Satan would by temptation commit a rape upon a Christian, and he cries out, and will not give consent, the Lord will charge it upon the devil's score. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite.

7th Rock of support. Our being tempted is no sign of God's hating us. A child of God oft thinks God doth not love him, because he lets him be haunted with the devil ; *non sequitur*, this is a wrong conclusion : was not Christ himself tempted ? yet by a voice from heaven proclaimed, ' This is my beloved Son,' Mat. iii. 17. Satan's tempting, and God's loving, may stand together. The goldsmith loves his gold in the fire ; God loves a saint, though shot at by fiery darts.

8th Rock of support. Christ's temptation was for our consolation, *Aquainis*. Jesus Christ is to be looked upon as a public person, as our head and representative ; and what Christ did, he did for us ; his prayer was for us, his suffering was for us ; when he was tempted, and overcame the temptation, he overcame for us. Christ's conquering Satan, was to shew that elect persons shall at last be a conqueror over Satan ; when Christ overcame Satan's temptation, it was not only to give us an example of courage, but an assurance of conquest : we have overcome Satan already in our head, and we shall at last perfectly overcome.

9th Rock of support. The saints' temptations shall not be above their strength. The lutenist will not stretch the strings of his lute too hard lest they break, 1 Cor. x. 13. ' God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.' God will proportion your strength to the stroke, 2 Cor. xii. 9. ' My grace is sufficient for thee.' The torch light of faith shall be kept burning, notwithstanding all the winds of temptation blowing.

10th Rock of support. These temptations shall produce much good.

1. They shall quicken a spirit of prayer in the saints, they shall pray more and better, temptation is *orationes flabellem*, the exciter of prayer : perhaps, before, the saints came to God as cold suiters in prayer, they prayed as if they prayed not.

Temptation is a medicine for security : when Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, he was more earnest in prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. ' Three times I besought the Lord ;' the thorn in his flesh was a spur in his sides to quicken him in prayer. The deer being shot with the dart, runs faster to the water ; when a soul is shot with the fiery darts of temptation, he runs the faster to the throne of grace : now he is earnest with God, either to take off the tempter, or to stand by him when he is tempted.

2. God makes the temptation to sin a means to prevent sin. The more a Christian is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation ; the more a chaste woman is assaulted, the more she abhors the motion : the stronger Joseph's temptation was, the stronger was his opposition. The more the enemy attempts to storm a castle, the more he is repelled and beat back.

3. Godly temptations causeth the increase of grace. *Unus Christianus temptatus mille* ; " one tempted Christian (saith Luther) is worth a thousand." He grows more in grace : as the bellows increaseth the flame : so the bellows of a temptation doth increase the flame of grace.

4. By these temptations God makes way for comfort ; as Christ after he was tempted, the angels came and ministered unto him, Matth. iv. 11. As, when Abraham had been warring, Melchisedeck brought him bread and wine to revive his spirits, Gen. xiv. 18. so, after the saints have been warring with Satan, now God sends his Spirit to comfort them ; which made Luther say, that temptations were *amplexus Christi*, Christ's embraces, because he doth then most sweetly manifest himself to the soul. Thus you see what rocks of support there are for tempted souls.

That I may further comfort such as are tempted, let me speak to two cases of the tempted.

1<sup>st</sup> Case. *I have horrid temptations to blasphemy.*

*Ans.* Did not the devil tempt Christ after this manner ? Mat. iv. 9. ' All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' What greater blasphemy can be imagined, than that the God of heaven and earth should worship the devil ? Yet Christ was tempted to this. If when blasphemous thoughts are injected, you tremble at them, and are in a cold sweat, they are not yours, Satan shall answer for them ; let him that plots the treason, suffer.

2<sup>d</sup> Case. *But my case is yet worse : I have been tempted to such sins, and have yielded : the tempter hath overcome me.*

*Ans.* I grant, that, through the withdrawing of God's grace, and the force of a temptation, a child of God may be overcome. David was overcome by a temptation in case of Bathsheba, and numbering the people. There is a party of grace in the heart,

true to Christ ; but sometimes it may be overvoted by corruption, and then a Christian yields : it is sad thus to yield to the tempter. But yet let not a child of God be wholly discouraged, and say there is no hope : let me pour in some balm of Gilead into this wounded soul.

1. Though a Christian may fall by a temptation, yet the seed of God is in him, 1 John iii. 9. ‘ His seed remaineth in him.’ *Gratia concutitur non excutitur*, Aug. A man may be bruised by a fall, yet there is life in him : a Christian, being foiled by Satan, may be like him who going to Jericho, fell among thieves, ‘ wounded and half dead,’ Luke x. 39. but still there is a vital principle of grace, his seed remains in him.

2. Though a child of God may be overcome *in praelio*, in a skirmish, yet not *in bello*, in the main battle : an army may be worsted in a skirmish, but overcomes at last. Though Satan may foil a child of God in skirmish by temptation, yet the believer shall overcome at last : a saint may be foiled, not conquered ; he may lose ground not lose the victory.

3. God doth not judge of his children by one action, but by the frame of their heart : as God doth not judge of a wicked man by one good action, so neither of a godly man by one bad action : an holy person may be worsted by a temptation, but God doth not measure him by that. Who measures milk when it feethes and boils up ? God doth not take the measure of a saint, when the devil hath boiled him up in a passion, but God judgeth of him by the pulse and temper of his heart : he would fear God ; when he fails he weeps. God looks which way the bias of his heart stands : if his heart be set against sin, God will pardon.

4. God will make a saint’s being foiled by temptation, turn to his spiritual advantage.

(1.) He may let a regenerate person fall by a temptation, to make him more watchful : perhaps he walks loosely, and so was decoyed into sin ; but for the future he grows more curious and cautious in his walking. The foiled Christian is a vigilant Christian ; he will have a care of coming within the lion’s chain any more, he will be shy and fearful of the occasion of sin ; he will not go abroad without his spiritual armour, and he girds on his armour by prayer. When a wild beast gets over the hedge, and hurts the corn, a man will make his fence stronger ; so, when the devil gets over the fence by a temptation, and foils a Christian, he will be sure to mend his fence, and be more vigilant against a temptation afterwards.

(2.) God lets his children be sometimes foiled by a temptation, that they may see their continual dependance on God, and may go to him for strength. We need not only habitual grace, to stand against temptation, but auxiliary grace ; as the boat

needs not only the oars, but wind, to carry it against a strong tide. God lets his children sometimes fall by a temptation, that, seeing their own weakness, they may rest more on Christ and free-grace, Cant. viii. 5.

(3.) God, by suffering his children to be foiled by a temptation, will settle them the more in grace; they shall get strength by their foils. The poets feign, that Antæas the giant, in wrestling with Hercules, got strength by every fall to the ground: it is true here; a saint, being foiled in wrestling with Satan, gets more spiritual strength. Peter had never such a strengthening in his faith, as after his being foiled in the high priest's hall: how was he fired with zeal, steeled with courage? He who before was dashed out of countenance by the voice of a maid, now dares openly confess Christ before the rulers and the councils, Acts ii. 14. The shaking of the tree settles it the more; God lets his children be shaken with the wind of temptation, that they may be more settled in grace afterwards. This I have spoken, that such Christians as God hath suffered to be foiled by temptation, may not cast away their anchor, or give way to sad despairing thoughts.

*Obj. But this may seem to make Christians careless whether they fall into a temptation or not, if God can make their being foiled by a temptation advantageous to them.*

*Ans.* We must distinguish between one who is foiled through weakness, and through wilfulness; if a soldier fights, but is foiled for want of strength, the general of the army will pity him, and bind up his wounds; but if he be wilfully foiled, and proves treacherous, he must expect no favour; so, if a Christian fight it out with Satan, but is foiled for want of strength (as it was with Peter) God will pity him, and do him good by his being foiled; but if he be foiled wilfully, and runs into a temptation, (as it was with Judas) God will shew him no favour, but will execute martial law upon him.

The uses remain.

*Use 1.* See in what continual danger we are. Satan is an exquisite artist, a deep head-piece, he lies in ambush to ensnare; he is the tempter, it is his delight to make the saints sin; and he is subtil in tempting, he hath ways and methods to deceive.

*First,* He brings a saint into sin, by making him confide in his habitual graces. Satan makes him believe he hath such a stock of grace, as will antidote him against all temptations; thus Satan deceived Peter, he made him trust in his grace: he had such a cable of faith and strong tacklings, that though the winds of temptation did blow never so fierce, he could weather the point; 'Though all men forsake thee, yet I will not;' as if he had more grace than all the apostles; thus he was led into temptation, and fell in the battle: a man may make an idol of

grace. Habitual grace is not sufficient without auxiliary. The boat needs not only oars, but a gale of wind to carry it against the tide; so we need not only habitual grace, but the blowing of the Spirit, to carry us against a strong temptation.

*Secondly*, Satan tempts to sin by the baits and allurements of the world. *Fœnus pecuniæ funus animæ*,—One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Such as the devil cannot debauch with vice, he will corrupt with money: 'all this will I give thee,' was his last temptation, Mat. iv. 9. Achan was deluded by the wedge of gold. Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.

*Thirdly*, Satan tempts to sin, *sub specie boni*, under a mask and shew of good; his temptations seem gracious motions.

1. He tempts men to duties of religion: you would think this strange, that Satan should tempt to duty; but it is so. 1. He tempts men to duty out of sinister ends. Thus he tempted the Pharisees to pray and give alms, that they might be seen of men, Mat. vi. 5. Prayer is a duty, but to look a-squint in prayer, to do it for vain glory, this prayer is turned into sin. 2. He tempts to duty, when it is not in season, Numb. xxviii. 2. 'My offering and my bread for my sacrifices, shall ye offer unto me in their due season.' Satan tempts to duty when it is out of season: he tempts to read the word at home, when we should be hearing the word: he will so tempt to one duty as it may hinder another. 3. He tempts some to duty, out of design that it may be a cloak for sin. He tempts them to frequency in duty, that they may sin and be less suspected. He tempted the Pharisees to make long prayers, that they might devour widows' houses under this pretence, Mat. xxiii. 14. who would suspect him of false weights, that so oft holds a Bible in his hand? Thus cunning is Satan, he tempts duty.

2. He tempts men to sin, out of a shew of love to Christ: you will think this strange, but there is truth in it. Many a good heart may think what he doth is in love to Christ, and all this while he may be under a temptation. Christ told Peter he must suffer at Jerusalem; Peter took him and rebuked him, 'Be it far from thee, Lord,' Matth. xvi. 21. as if he had said to Christ, Lord, thou hast deserved no such shameful death, and this shall not be unto thee. Peter, as he thought, did this out of love to Christ, but Peter was all this while under a temptation. What had become of us, if Christ had hearkened to Peter, and had not suffered? So, when Christ washed his disciples feet, Peter was so mannerly that he would not let Christ wash his feet, John xiii. 8. 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.' This Peter did (as he thought) out of love and respect to Christ: Peter thought Christ was too good to wash his feet, and therefore would have put Christ off; but this was a temptation, the



devil put Peter upon this sinful modesty ; he struck at Peter's salvation, inasmuch that Christ saith, ' If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' So again, when the Samaritans would not receive Christ, the disciples, James and John, said, ' Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume them ?' Luke ix. 54. They did this, as they thought, out of love to Christ : they would wish for fire to consume his enemies : but they were under a temptation ; it was not zeal, but the wild-fire of their own passion ; ' ye know not (saith Christ) what Spirits ye are of.'

*Fourthly*, Satan tempts to that sin which a man's heart is naturally most inclinable to ; he will not tempt a civil man to gross sin, this is abhorring to the sight of nature ; Satan never sets a dish before men that they do not love : but he will tempt a civil man to pride and to trust in his own righteousness, and to make a Saviour of his civility. The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels ; the civil man would weave a web of salvation out of his own righteousness. See then in what danger we are, when Satan is continually lying in ambush with his temptations.

*Inf.* 2. See man's inability of himself to resist a temptation. Could he stand of himself against a temptation, this prayer were needless, ' Lead us not into temptation : ' no man hath power of himself to resist a temptation, further than God gives him strength, Jer. x. 23. ' O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself.' If Peter who had true grace, and Adam who had perfect grace, could not stand against temptation, much less can any stand by the power of nature ; which confutes the doctrine of free-will : what freedom of will hath man, when he cannot resist the least temptation ?

*Inf.* 3. Here is matter of humiliation, that there is in us such an aptitude and proneness to yield to temptation—*Netimur in vetitum*—We are as ready to swallow a temptation, as the fish to swallow the bait. If the devil tempt to pride, lust, envy, revenge ; how do we symbolize with Satan, and embrace his snares ? Like a woman that hath a suitor come to her, and she doth not need much wooing, she presently gives her consent : Satan comes a-wooing by temptation, and we soon yield ; he strikes fire, and we are as dry tinder that catcheth the first spark ; he knocks by temptation, and it is sad to think how soon we open the door to the devil, which is as if one should open the door to a thief ; this may cause a spring of tears.

*Inf.* 4. See hence, a Christian's life is no easy life ; it is military ; he hath a Goliath in the field to encounter with, one that is armed with power and subtilty ; he hath his wiles and darts. A Christian must be continually watching and fighting ; Satan's designs carry death in the front, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' Seeking

whom he may devour :’ therefore we had need be always with our weapons in our hand. How few think their life a warfare ? Though they have an enemy in the field, that is always laying of snares, or shooting of darts, yet they do not stand centinel, or get their spiritual artillery ready ; they put on their jewels, but not their armour, Job xxi. 12. ‘ They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ,’ as if they were rather in music than in battle. Many are asleep in sloth, when they should be fighting against Satan ; and no wonder the devil shoots them when he finds them asleep.

*Use 2.* It reproves them who pray, ‘ Lead us not into temptation : yet run themselves into temptation : such are they who go to plays and masquerades, and hunt after strange flesh. Some go a slower pace to hell, but such as run themselves into temptation, these go galloping thither : we have too many of these in this debauched age, who, as if they thought they could not sin fast enough, tempt the devil to tempt them.

*Use 3. Exhortation.* Let us labour that we be not overcome by temptation.

*Qu. What means may be used, that Satan’s temptations may not prevail against us ?*

*Ans.* 1. Avoid solitariness. It is no wisdom in fighting with an enemy to give him the advantage of the ground : we give Satan advantage of the ground when we are alone. Eve was foiled in the absence of her husband. A virgin is not so soon set upon in company, Eccl. iv. 10. ‘ Two are better than one.’ Get into the communion of saints, and that is a good remedy against temptation.

2. If you would not be overcome of temptation, beware of the predominancy of melancholy : this is *etra bilis*, a black humour seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy disturbs reason, and exposeth to temptation. One calls melancholy *balneum diaboli*, the devil’s bath ; he bathes himself with delight in such a person. Melancholy clothes the mind in sable, it fills it with such dismal apprehensions, as oft end in self-murder.

3. If you would not be overcome of temptation, study sobriety, 1 Pet. v. 8. ‘ Be sober, because your adversary walketh about.’ Sober-mindedness consists in the moderate use of earthly things : an immoderate desire of these things oft brings men into the snare of the devil, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ‘ They that will be rich fall into a snare.’ He who loves riches inordinately, will purchase them unjustly. Ahab would swim to Naboth’s vineyard in blood. He who is drunk with the love of the world, is never free from temptation ; he will pull down his soul to build up an estate. *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis auri, jâcra fames ?* — Be sober, take heed of being drunk with the love of the world, lest ye fall into temptation.

4. Be always upon your guard, watch against Satan's wiles, and subtilities, 1 Pet. v. 8. 'Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about.' A Christian must *excubias agere* keep watch and ward : see where Satan labours to make a breach, see what grace he most strikes at, or what sin he most tempts to, Mark xiii. 37. 'I say, unto you all, watch.' Watch all the senses, the eye, the ear, the touch ; Satan can creep in here ; O how needful is the spiritual watch ! shall Satan be watchful, and we drowsy ? Doth he watch to devour us, and shall not we watch to save ourselves ? Let us see what sin our heart most naturally inclines to, and watch against this.

5. Beware of idleness ; Satan sows most of his seed in fallow ground. It was Hierom's counsel to his friend, to be ever busied, that if the devil did come he might find him working in the vineyard. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt : the bird that sits still is shot : he that wants employment, never wants temptation : when a man hath nothing to do, Satan will bring grist to the mill, and find him work enough.

6. Make known thy case to some godly friend : the hiding a serpent in the bosom, is not the way to be safe ; when the old serpent hath gotten into your bosom by a temptation, do not hide him there by keeping his counsel. If a spark be got into the thatch, it is not wisdom to conceal it, it may set the house on fire ; conceal not temptation. The keeping of secrets is for familiar friends : be not so great a friend to Satan, as to keep his secrets ; reveal your temptations, which is the way to procure others prayers and advice, let all see that you are not true to Satan's party, because you tell all his plots, and reveal his treasons. Besides the telling of our case to some experienced Christian, is the way to have ease ; as the opening of a vein gives ease, so the opening of our case to a friend gives ease to the soul, and a temptation doth not so much enflame.

7. Make use of the word. This the apostle calls the 'sword of the spirit,' Eph. vi. 17. a fit weapon to fight against the tempter. This 'sword of the Spirit' is *gladius anceps*, a two-edged sword : it wounds carnal lust, and it wounds Satan. He who travels a road where there is robbing, will be sure to ride with his sword ; we are traveling to heaven, and in this road there is a thief will always beset us, Satan is in every place where we go ; he meets us at church, he doth not miss a sermon, he will be tempting us there ; sometimes to drowsiness ; when you sleep at a sermon, the devil rocks you asleep ; sometimes he tempts by distracting the mind in hearing, sometimes he tempts to question the truth of what you hear ; thus we meet with the tempter at church. And he tempts in the shop, he tempts you to use collusion and deceit, Hos. xii. 7. 'The ballances of deceit are in his hand :' so that we meet with the

tempter every where ; therefore, this thief being in the road, we had need ride with a sword ; we must have the ‘ sword of the Spirit about us.’ We must have skill to use this sword, and have an heart to draw it out, and this sword will put the devil to flight. Thus our blessed Saviour, when Satan tempted him to distrust and blasphemy, he uses a scripture weapon, ‘ It is written.’ Three times Christ wounded the old serpent with this sword. Christ could with his power and authority have rebuked the prince of the air, as he did the winds ; but he stops the devil’s mouth with scripture, ‘ It is written.’ It is not our vows and resolutions will do it, it is not the papists’ holy water or charms will drive away the devil, but let us bring the word of God against him ; this is such an argument as he cannot answer. It was a saying of Luther, “ I have had great troubles of mind, but so soon as I laid hold on any place of scripture and staid myself upon it, as upon my chief anchor, straightway my temptations vanished away.” There’s no temptation but we have a fit scripture to answer it. If Satan tempts to sabbath-breaking, answer him, ‘ It is written, Remember to keep the sabbath day holy.’ If he tempts to uncleanness, answer him. ‘ It is written, whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.’ If he tempts to carnal fear, say, ‘ It is written, fear not them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.’ No such way to confute temptation as by scripture ; the arrows which we shoot against Satan must be fetched out of this quiver. Many people want this sword of the Spirit, they have not a Bible ; others seldom make use of this sword, but let it rust ; they look seldom into the scripture, therefore no wonder they are overcome by temptations. He who is well skilled in the word, is like one who hath a plaister ready, to lay upon the wound as soon as it is made, and so the danger is prevented. Oh study the scripture, and you will be too hard for the devil ; he cannot stand against this.

8. Let us be careful of our own hearts, that they do not decoy us into sin. The apostle saith, ‘ a man is drawn away of his own heart, and enticed.’ James i. 14. *Quisique sibi Satan est*, Bern. Every man hath a tempter in his own bosom. A traitor within the castle is dangerous. The heart can bring forth a temptation, though Satan do not midwife it into the world ; if Satan were dead and buried the heart would draw us to evil. As the ground of all diseases lies in the humours of the body ; so the seed of all sin lies in the original lust. Look to your hearts.

9. If you would not be overcome of temptation, flee the ‘ occasions of sin.’ Occasions of sin have a great force in them to awaken lust within. He that would keep himself free from infection, will not come near an infected house, if you would be

sober, avoid drunken company. Joseph when he was enticed by his mistress, shunned the occasion ; the text saith, ' he would not be with her,' Gen. xxxix. 10. If you would not be snared with popery, do not hear the mass. The Nazarite, who was forbid wine, might not eat grapes, which might occasion intemperance. Come not near the borders of a temptation. Suppose one had a body made of gun powder, he would not come near the least spark of fire, lest he should be blown up ; many pray, ' lead us not into temptation,' and they run themselves into temptation.

10. If you would not be overcome by temptation make use of faith, ' above all things take the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16. Faith wards off Satan's fiery darts, that they do not hurt, 1 Pet. v. 9. ' Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' Mariners in a storm flee to their anchor ; flee to your anchor of faith : faith brings Christ along with it, duellers bring their second with them into the field ; faith brings Christ along for its second. Faith puts into Christ, and then the devil cannot hurt us. The chicken is safe from the birds of prey, under the wings of the hen ; and we are secure from the tempter, under the wings of the Lord Jesus. Though other graces are of use to resist the impulsions of Satan, yet faith is the conquering grace ; faith takes hold of Christ's merits, value and virtue : and so a Christian is too hard for the devil. The stars vanish when the sun appears : Satan vanisheth when faith appears.

11. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be much in prayer. Such as walk in infectious places, carry antidotes about them ; prayer is the best antidote against temptation. When the apostle had exhorted ' to put on the whole armour of God,' Eph. vi. 11. he adds, ver. 18. ' Praying with all prayer.' Without this, *reliqua arma parum profunt*, Zanchy. All other weapons will do little good. Christ prescribes this remedy, ' Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,' Mark xiv. 38. A Christian fetcheth down strength from heaven by prayer. Let us cry to God for help against the tempter, as Sampson cried to heaven for help, Judges xvi. 28. ' O Lord God, remember me and strengthen me, I pray thee, that I may be avenged of the Philistines.' And ver. 30. ' The house ' upon the lords, and upon all the people.'

Prayer is *flagellum diaboli*, it whips, and torments the devil ; the apostle bids us ' pray without ceasing.' 1 Thess. v. 17. It was Luther's advice to a lady, when temptation came, to fall upon her knees by prayer. Prayer doth alluage the force of a temptation. Prayer is the best charm or spell we can use against the devil. Temptation may bruise our heel ; but, by prayer, we wound the serpent's head. When Paul had a ' messenger of Satan to buffet him,' what remedy doth he use ? He

betook himself to prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. 'For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.' When Satan assaults furiously, let us pray fervently.

12. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be humble in you own eyes ; such are nearest falling, who presume of their own strength. Penelton, who said, his fat flesh should melt in the fire : instead of his fat melting, his heart melted, and he turned from the truth. When men grow into a big conceit, God lets them fall, to prick the bladder of pride. O be humble ! such are like to hold best out in temptation, who have most grace ; but God gives more grace to the humble, James iv. 6. Beware of pride ; an impoſthume is not more dangerous in the body, than pride in the soul. The doves (saith Pliny) take a pride in their feathers, and in their flying high ; at last they fly so high, that they are a prey to the hawk ; when men fly high in pride and self-confidence, they become a prey to the tempter.

13. If you would not be foiled by temptation, do not enter into a dispute with Satan. When Eve began to argue the case with the serpent, the serpent was too hard for her ; the devil, by his logic disputed her out of paradise ; Satan can mince sin, make it small, and varnish it over, and make it look like virtue ; Satan is too subtil a sophister to hold an argument with him. Dispute not, but fight. If you enter into a parley with Satan, you give him half the victory.

14. If we would not be overcome of Satan, let us put on Christian fortitude. An enemy we must expect who is either shooting of darts, or laying of snares, therefore let us be armed with courage, 2 Chron. xix. 11. 'Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.' The coward never won victory ; and, to animate us in our combat with Satan. (1.) We have a good captain that marcheth before us, Christ is called the 'captain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. (2.) We have good armour ; grace is armour of God's making, Eph. vi. 11. (3.) Satan is beaten in part already ; Christ hath given him his death wound upon the cross, Col. i. 15. (4.) Satan is a chained enemy, his power is limited ; he cannot force the will ; it was all Eve complained of, that the serpent 'deceived her,' not constrained her, Gen. iii. 13. Satan hath *auſpitiū suadendi* not *potentiā cogendi* ; he may persuade, not compel. (5.) He is a cursed enemy, and God's curse will blast him ; therefore put on holy gallantry of spirit and magnanimity. Fear not Satan. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is against you.

15. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us call in the help of others. If an house be set on fire, would not you call in help ? Satan tempts, that he may rob you of your soul ;

acquaint some friends with your case, and beg for their counsel and prayers. Who knows but Satan may be cast out by the joint prayers of others? In case of temptations, how exceeding helpful is the communion of saints?

16. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us make use of all the encouragements we can. If Satan be a roaring lion, 'Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah:' If Satan tempts, Christ prays: if Satan be a serpent to sting, Christ is a brazen serpent to heal; if the conflict be hard, look to the crown, James i. 12. Whilst we are fighting, Christ will succour us; and when we overcome he will crown us. What makes the soldier endure a bloody fight, but the hope of a golden harvest? Think, that shortly God will call us out of the field where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and he will set a garland of glory upon our head. How will the case be altered? Instead of fighting, singing; instead of an helmet, a diadem; instead of a sword, a palm branch of victory; instead of armour, white robes; instead of Satan's skirmishes, the kisses and embraces of a Saviour, the viewing these eternal recompences, would keep us from yielding to temptation. Who would to gratify a lust, lose a crown?

*Use 4.* A word of counsel to such as are tempted; be so wise as to make good use of your temptations. As we should labour to improve our afflictions, so to improve our temptations. We should pick some good out of temptation, as Samson got honey out of the lion.

*Qu.* *What good comes out of a temptation? Can there be any good in being set upon by an enemy? Can there be any good to have fiery darts shot at us?*

*Ans.* Yes, God that can make a treacle of poison, can make his people get much good by their temptations. First, hereby a Christian sees that corruption in his heart, which he never saw before. Water in a glass looks pure, but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up; so in temptation a Christian sees that scum of sin boil up, that passion and distrust of God, as he thought had not been in his heart. Secondly, hereby a Christian sees more of the wiles of Satan, and is better able to withstand them; St. Paul had been in the fencing-school of temptation, and he grew expert in finding out Satan's stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' Thirdly, hereby a Christian grows more humble; God will rather let his children fall into the devil's hands, than be proud: temptation makes the plumes of pride fall, 2 Cor. xii. 7. 'Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.' Better is that temptation that humbles, than that duty which makes one proud. Thus you see how much good a Chris-

tian may get by temptation ; which made Luther say, three things make a good divine, prayer, meditation, temptation.

*Use 5.* To such as have been under fore temptations and buffetings of Satan, to lust, revenge self-murder, but God hath stood by them, and given them strength to overcome the tempter.

1. Be very thankful to God ; say as 1 Cor. xv. 57. ‘ Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory.’ Be much in doxology. Why were we kept more than others from falling into sin ? Was it because temptation was not so strong ? No, Satan shoots his darts with all his force. Was the cause in our will ? No, such a broken shield would never have conquered Satan’s temptations ; know, that it was free grace that beat back the tempter, and brought us off with trophies of victory. O be thankful to God : had you been overcome with temptation, you might have put black spots in the face of religion, and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme, 2 Sam. xii. 14. Had you been overcome you might have lain sick of a ‘ wounded spirit,’ and cried out with David of ‘ broken bones.’ After David yielded to temptation, he lay for three quarters of a year in horror of mind : and some divines think, he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. O therefore, what cause have they to stand upon mount Gerizzim blessing of God, who in a field of battle, have got the better of Satan, and been more than conquerors ! Say, as the Psalmist, Psal. cxxiv. 6. ‘ Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth :’ so blessed be God who hath not given us as prey to Satan that roaring lion. When God puts mercy in the promises, we must put praise in the conclusion.

2. You that have been tempted, and come off victors, be full of sympathy, pity tempted souls ; shew your piety in your pity. Do you see Satan’s darts sticking in their sides ? Do what you can to pull out these darts : communicate your experiences to them ; tell them how you broke the devil’s snare, and your Saviour was your succour.—The apostle speaks of restoring others in the ‘ spirit of meekness,’ Gal. i. 6. The Greek word for rest, alludes to chirurgeons, who set bones out of joint ; so, when we see such as are tempted, and Satan hath, as it were, put their bones out of joint, labour to put them in joint again, with all love, meekness and compassion. A word ‘ spoken in season, may relieve a soul fainting in temptation :’ and you may do, as the good Samaritan, drop in oil and wine into the wound, Luke x. 34. *Vir spiritualis consilia magis quam convitia meditatatur*, Aug.

3. You that have got a conquest of Satan, be not secure. Think not that you shall never be troubled with the tempter more : he is not like the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 23. ‘ The bands



of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.' A cock, if he be made once to run away, he will fight no more; but, it is not so with Satan, he is a restless enemy: and if you have beaten him back, he will make a fresh onset. Hannibal said of Marcellus, a Roman captain, that whether he did beat or was beaten, he was never quiet.

When Christ had worsted Satan, he went away from Christ, but *ad tempus*, for a season, Luke iv. 13. as if he meant to come again. When we have gotten the better of Satan, we are apt to grow secure, to lay aside our armour, and leave off our watch; which, when Satan perceives, then he comes upon us with a new temptation and wounds us: he deals with us as David did with the Amalekites, when they had taken the spoil, and were secure, 1 Sam. xxx. 16. 'They were spread upon the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing:' then, ver. 17. 'David smote them, and there escaped not a man of them.' Therefore, after we have got the better of the tempter, we must do as the mariners in a calm, mend our tackling, as not knowing how soon another storm may come. Satan may for a time retreat, that he may afterwards come on more fiercely: he may go away a while, and bring other seven spirits with him, Luke xi. 26.

Therefore, be not secure, but stand upon your watch towers; lie in your armour, always expect a fight. Say, as he that hath a short respite from an ague, I look every day when my fit shall come; so say, I look every day when the tempter should come; I will put myself into a warlike posture. Satan, when he is beat out of the field, is not beaten out of heart, he will come again. He had little hope to prevail against Christ: Christ gave him three deadly wounds, and made him retreat; yet he departed only 'for a season.' If the devil cannot conquer us, yet he knows he shall molest us; if he cannot destroy us, he will surely disturb us; therefore we must, with the pilot, have our compass ready, and be able to turn our needle to any point where temptation shall blow. If the tempter come not so soon as we expect, yet, by putting ourselves into a posture, we have this advantage, we are always prepared.

To conclude all; let us oft make this prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation.' If Satan woos us by a temptation, let us not give consent. But in case a Christian hath, through weakness (and not out of a design) yielded to a temptation, yet let him not 'cast away his anchor:' take heed of despair, this is worse than the fall itself.

Christian, keep thy soul in the brinish waters of repentance, and God will be appeased. Repentance gives the soul a vomit: Christ loved Peter after his denial of him, and sent the first news of his resurrection to him; 'Go tell the disciples and

Peter.' It is an error to think that one act of sin can destroy the habit of grace : It is a wrong to God's mercy, and a Christian's comfort, to make this despairing conclusion that after one hath fallen by temptation, his estate is irrecoverable. Therefore, Christian, if thou hast fallen with Peter, repent with Peter, and God will be ready to seal thy pardon.



MATTH. vi. 13. *But deliver us from evil.*

THE second branch of this sixth petition is, *libero nos a malo* : ' Deliver us from evil.' There is more in this petition than is expressed ; the thing expressed is, that we may be kept from evil, the thing further intended is, that we may make a progress in piety, Titus ii. 11. ' Denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts ;' there is being delivered from evil ; ' that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly ;' there is a progress in piety.

I begin with the first thing in this petition expressed, ' Deliver us from evil.'

Qu. *What evil do we pray to be delivered from ?*

Ans. 1. In general, from the evil of sin.

2. More particularly, we pray to be delivered,

(1.) From the evil of our own heart, it is called an evil heart, Heb. iii. 12.

(2.) From the evil of Satan ; he is called the evil one, Mat. xiii. 19.

(3.) From the evil of the world ; it is called the present evil world, Gal. i. 4.

*First*, in general, ' Deliver us from evil : ' we pray to be delivered from the evil of sin. Not that we pray to be delivered immediately from the presence and in-being of sin, for that cannot be in this life, we cannot shake off this viper ; but we pray, that God would deliver us more and more from the power and practice, from the scandalous acts of sin, which cast a reflection upon the gospel.

Sin then is the deadly evil we pray against ; ' Deliver us from evil ; ' with what pencil shall I be able to draw the deformed face of sin ? The devil would baptize sin with the name of virtue ; it is easy to lay fair colours on a black face.

But I shall endeavour to shew you what a prodigious monster sin is ; and there is great reason we should pray, ' Deliver us from evil.'

Sin is, (as the apostle saith) exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 13. Sin is the very spirits of mischief distilled ; it is called ' the ac-

curfed thing,' Josh. vii. 13. That fin is the moft execrable evil, appears feveral ways :

1. Look upon fin in its original.
2. Look upon fin in its nature.
3. Look upon fin in the judgment and opinion of the godly.
4. Look upon fin in the comparative.
5. Look upon fin in the manner of cure.

6. Look upon fin in its direful effects ; and when you have feen all thefe, you will apprehend what an horrid evil fin is, and what great reafon we have to pray, ' Deliver us from evil.'

1<sup>st</sup>, Look upon fin in its original ; it fetcheth its pedigree from hell. Sin is of the devil, John viii. 34. Sin calls the devil father. It is *ferpentis venenum*, as Auftin faith, it is the poifon the old ferpent hath fpit into our virgin-nature.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Look upon fin in its nature, and fo it is evil. (1.) See what the fcripture compares it to. Sin hath got a bad name, it is compared to the vomit of dogs, 2 Pet. ii. 22. to a menftruous cloth, Ifa. xxx. 22. which, as Jerom faith was the moft unclean thing under the law : it is compared to the plague, 1 Kings viii. 38. to a gangrene, 2 Tim. ii. 17. Perfons under thefe difeafes we would be loth to eat and drink with.

(2.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is injurious to God three ways :

1. It is a breach of God's royal law, 1 John iii. 4. Sin is a tranfgreffion of the law : It is *crimen laeae majestatis*, high treason againft heaven. What greater injury can be offered to a prince, than to trample upon his royal edicts ? Neh. ix. 16. ' They have caft thy laws behind their backs.'

2. Sin is a contumacious affront to God, it is a walking contrary to him, Lev. xxvi. 40. the Hebrew word for fin fignifies rebellion : fin flies in the face of God, Job xv. 25. ' He ftretcheth forth his hand againft God.' We ought not to lift up a thought againft God, much lefs to lift up an hand againft him, but the finner doth fo. Sin is *Deicidium* ; it would not only unthrone God, but ungod him : if fin could help it, God fhould be no longer God.

3. Sin is injurious to God, as it is an act of high ingratitude. God feeds a finner, fcreens off many evils from him ; yet he not only forgets God's mercies, but abuleth them, Hof. ii. 8. ' I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her filver, which they prepared for Baal.' God may fay, I gave thee wit, health, riches, which thou haft employed againft me. A finner makes an arrow of God's mercies, and thoots at him, 2 Sam xvi. 17. ' Is this thy kindnefs to thy friend ?' Did God give thee life to fin ? Did he give thee wages to ferve the devil ? O what an ungrateful thing is fin ! Ingratitude forfeits mercy, as the merchant doth his goods by not paying cuftom.

(3.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is a foolish thing, Luke xii. 20. 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Is it not foolish to prefer a short lease before an inheritance? A sinner prefers the pleasure of sin for a season, before those pleasures which run at God's right hand for evermore. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? Sin gratifies Satan. *Mortaliū errores epulae sunt daemonum*, men's sins feast the devil. Is it not folly for a man to be *felo de se*, guilty of his own destruction, to give himself poison? A sinner hath an hand in his own death, Prov. i. 18. 'They lay wait for their own blood;' no creature did ever willingly kill itself but man.

(4.) Sin is a polluting thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution; it is as rust to gold, as a stain to beauty; it is called 'filthiness of flesh and spirit,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. *Quanta foeditus vitiosae mentis!* Cicer. This filth of sin is inward: a spot in the face may be easily wiped off, but to have the liver and lungs tainted is far worse; sin hath got into the conscience, Tit. i. 15. Sin defiles all the faculties, the mind, memory, affections, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted; sin pollutes and fly-blows our holy things; the leper, in the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had polluted the altar; an emblem of sin's leprosy spotting our holy things.

(5.) Sin is a debasing thing, it degrades us of our honour, Dan. xi. 25. 'In those days shall stand up a vile person.' This was spoken of Antiochus Euphraphes, who was a king, and his name signifies illustrious; but sin had made him vile. Sin blots a man's name; nothing so turns a man's glory into shame as sin doth: sin makes a man like a beast, Ps. xlix. 20. it is worse to be like a beast, than to be a beast; it is no shame to be a beast, it is a shame for a man to be like a beast. Lust makes a man brutish, and wrath makes him devilish.

(6.) Sin is an enslaving thing. A sinner is a slave, when he sins most freely. *Grave servitutis jugum*, Cicero. Sin makes men the devil's servants; Satan bids them sin, and they do it; he bid Judas betray Christ, and he did it; he bid Ananias tell a lie, and he did it; Acts v. 3. When a man commits a sin, he is the devil's lackey, and runs on his errand; they who serve Satan, have such a bad master, that they will be afraid to receive their wages.

(7.) Sin is an unfavourable thing, Psalm xiv. 3. 'They are altogether become filthy; in the Heb. they are become stinking! Sin is very noisome to God: that person who shall worship in God's house, yet live in the sin of uncleanness, let him be perfumed with all the spices of Arabia, his prayers are unfavourable, Isa. i. 13. 'Incense is an abomination to me;' there-

fore God is said to 'behold the proud afar off,' Pf. cxxxviii. 6. He will not come near the dung-hill sinner, that hath such noisome vapours coming from him.

(8.) Sin is a painful thing, it costs men much labour and pains to accomplish their wicked designs, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' *Peccatum est sui, ipsius poena.* What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of foldiers, and then back again to the garden. What pains did the powder-traitors take in digging through a thick stone wall? What pains in laying their barrells of powder, and then covering them with crows of iron? How did they tire out themselves in sin's drudgery? Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice: It is easier to be sober than intemperate: it is easier to serve God than to follow sin. A wicked man sweats at the devil's plough, and is at great pains to damn himself.

(9.) Sin is a disturbing thing; whatever defiles, disturbs. Sin breaks the peace of the soul, Isa. lvii. 21. 'No peace to the wicked.' When a man sins presumptuously, he stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. Sin causeth a trembling at the heart. When Spira had sinned, he had a hell in his conscience; he was in that horror, that he professed he envied Cain and Judas. Charles IX. who was guilty of the massacre in Paris, was afterwards a terror to himself; he was frighted at every noise, and could not endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music.—Sin breaks the peace of the soul. Cain, in killing Abel, stabbed half the world at a blow, but could not kill the worm of his own conscience. Thus you see what an evil sin is in the nature of it; and had we not need pray, 'Deliver us from evil.'

3dly, Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly, and it will appear to be the most prodigious evil.

1. Sin is so great an evil, that the godly will rather do any thing than sin, Heb. xi. 24. 'Moses chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.' The primitive Christians said, *ad leonum potius quam lenonem*, they chose rather to be devoured by lions without, than lusts within. Irenaeus was carried to a place, where was a cross on one side, and an idol on the other, and he was put to his choice, either to bow to the idol, or suffer on the cross, and he chose the latter. A wise man will choose rather to have a rent in his coat than in his flesh: the godly will rather endure outward sufferings than a rent in their conscience. So great an evil is in sin, that the godly will not sin for the greatest gain; they will not sin though they might purchase an estate by it, nay though they were sure to promote God's glory by it.

2. The godly testify sin is a great evil, in that they desire to

die upon no account more than this, that they may be rid of sin ; they are desirous to put off the clothing of the flesh, that they may be unclothed of sin : it is their greatest grief that they are troubled with such inmates, they have the stirrings of pride, lust, envy. It was a cruel torment Mezentius used, he tied a dead man to a living : thus a child of God hath corruption joined with grace : here is a dead man tied to the living. So hateful is this, that a believer desires to die for no other reason more than this, that death shall free him from sin. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. Thus you see, in the opinion of the godly, sin is the most hyperbolical and execrable evil.

*4thly*, Look upon sin in the comparative, and it will appear to be the most deadly evil. Compare what you will with it ; 1. Afflictions, 2. Death, 3. Hell, and still sin is worse.

*First*, Compare sin with affliction : there is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction.

1. Sin is the cause of affliction, the cause is more than the effect. Sin brings all mischief : sin hath sickness, sword, famine, and all judgments in the womb of it. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, wastes the radical moisture. As the poets feign of Pandora's box, when it was opened, it filled the world full of diseases ; when Adam broke the box of original righteousness, it hath caused all the penal evils in the world. Sin is the Phæton that sets the world on fire. Sin turned the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise. Sin causeth mutinies, divisions, massacres, Jer. xlvii. 6. ' O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet ? ' The sword of God's justice lies quietly in the scabbard, till sin draws it out and whets it against a nation. So that sin is worse than affliction, it being the cause of it : the cause is more than the effect.

2. God is the author of affliction, Amos iii. 6. ' Is there any evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it ? ' It is meant of the evil of affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but no hand in sin : God is the cause of every action, so far as it is natural, but not as it is sinful. He who makes an instrument of iron, is not the cause of the rust and canker which corrupts the iron ; so God made the instrument of our souls, but the rust and canker of sin, which corrupts our souls, God never made. *Peccatum Deus non fecit*, Austin. God can no more act evil, than the sun can darken. In this sense sin is worse than affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but disclaims having any hand in sin.

3. Affliction doth but reach the body, and make that miserable ; but sin makes the soul miserable. The soul is the most noble part. The soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay : it is excellent in its essence, a spiritual, immortal substance ; ex-

cellent in the price paid for it, redeemed with the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. It is more worth than a world ; the world is of a coarser make, the soul of a finer spinning : in the world we see the finger of God, in the soul the image of God. To have the precious soul endangered, is far worse than to have the body endangered. Sin wrongs the soul, Prov. viii. 56. Sin casts this jewel of the soul overboard. Affliction is but skin deep, it can but take away the life, but sin takes away the soul, Luke xii. 20. The loss of the soul is an unparalled loss, it can never be made up again. " God (saith St. Chrysostom) hath given thee two eyes, if thou lovest one, thou hast another ; but thou hast but one soul, and if that be lost, it can never be repaired." Thus sin is worse than affliction ; the one can but reach the body, the other ruins the soul. Is there not great reason then, that we should often put up this petition, ' Deliver us from evil ?'

4. Afflictions are good for us, Ps. cxix. 71. It is good for me that I was afflicted.' Many can bless God for affliction. Affliction humbles, Lam. iii. 19. ' Remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.' Afflictions are compared to thorns, Hos. ii. 8. these thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Affliction is the school of repentance, Jer. xxxi. 18. ' Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised : I repented.' The fire being put under the still, makes the water drop from the roses : the fire of affliction makes the water of repentance drop from the eyes. Affliction brings us nearer to God. The loadstone of mercy doth not draw us so near to God as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with want, then, saith he, ' I will arise and go to my father,' Luke xv. 18. Afflictions prepare for glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. ' This light affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory ;' The limner lays his gold upon dark colours : so God lays first the dark colours of affliction, and then the golden colour of glory. Thus affliction is for our good ; but sin is not for our good, it keeps good things from us, Jer. v. 25. ' Your sins have withholden good things from you.' Sin stops the current of God's mercy, it precipitates men to ruin. Manasseh's affliction brought him to humiliation ; but Judas' sin brought him to desperation.

5. A man may be afflicted, and his conscience may be quiet. Paul's feet were in the stocks, yet he had the witness of his conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. The head may ache, yet the heart may be well : the outward man may be afflicted, yet the soul may dwell at ease, Ps. xxv. 13. The hail may beat upon the tiles of the house, when there is music within : in the midst of the outward pain, there may be inward peace. Thus, in affliction, conscience may be quiet ; but when a man commits a

presumptuous, scandalous sin, conscience is troubled : by defiling the purity of conscience, we lose the peace of conscience. When Spira had sinned, and abjured the faith, he was a terror to himself, he had an hell in his conscience. Tiberius the emperor felt such a sting in his conscience, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily.

6. In affliction we may have the love of God. Afflictions are love-tokens, Rev. iii. 19. ‘As many as I love, I rebuke.’ Afflictions are sharp arrows, but shot from the hand of a loving father. If a man should throw a bag of money at another, and it should bruise him a little, and raise the skin, he would not be offended, but take it as a fruit of love ; so when God bruise us with affliction, it is to enrich us with the golden graces of his Spirit, all is love : but when we commit sin, God withdraws his love ; it is the sun overcast with a cloud, nothing appears but anger and displeasure. When David had sinned in the matter of Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 27. The thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

7. There are many encouragements to suffer affliction, God himself suffers with us, Isa. lxii. 9. ‘In all their afflictions he was afflicted.’ God will strengthen us in our sufferings, Ps. xxxvii. 39. ‘He is their strength in the time of trouble.’ Either God makes our burden lighter, or our faith stronger. He will compensate and recompense our sufferings, Mat. xix. 29. ‘Every one that hath forsaken houses or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and inherit life everlasting.’ Here are encouragements, to suffer affliction, but there is no encouragement to sin ; God hath brandished a flaming-sword of threatenings to deter us from sin, Ps. lxxviii. 21. ‘God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.’ There is a flying roll of curses which enters into the house of a sinner, Zech. v. 4. ‘If a man sin, be it at his pearl, Deut. xxxii. 42. ‘I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.’ God will make men weary of their sins, or he will make them weary of their lives. Thus sin is worse than affliction : there are encouragements to suffer affliction, but no encouragement to sin.

8. When a person is afflicted, only he himself suffers ; but by sinning openly he doth hurt to others. (1.) He doth hurt to the unconverted ; one man’s sin may lay a stone in another man’s way, at which he may stumble and fall into hell ; O the evil of scandalous sin ! Some are discouraged, others hardened ; thy sinning may be the cause of another’s damning, Mal. ii. 7, 8. The priests going wrong caused others to stumble. (2.) He doth hurt to the converted : by an open scandalous sin he offends weak believers, and so sins against Christ, 1 Cor. viii. 12. Thus sin is worse than affliction because it doth hurt to others.



9. In affliction the saints may rejoice, 1 Theff. i. 6. 'Ye received the word in much affliction with joy,' Heb. x. 34. 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.' Aristotle speaks of a bird that lives among thorns, yet sings sweetly; so a child of God can rejoice in afflictions. St. Paul had his prison-songs, Rom. v. 3. 'We glory in tribulation.' The Greek word signifies an "exuberancy of joy, a joy with boasting and triumph." God doth oft pour in those divine consolations as cause the saints to rejoice in afflictions; they had rather have their afflictions, than want their comforts; God doth candy their wormwood with sugar, Rom. v. 5. You have seen the sun-shine when it rains; the saints have had the shinings of God's face, when afflictions have rained and dropped upon them. Thus we may rejoice in affliction, but we cannot rejoice in sin, Hos. ix. 1. 'Rejoice not, O Israel for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a-whoring from thy God.' Sin is a matter of shame and grief, not of joy. David having sinned in numbering of the people, 'his heart smote him,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. As the pricking of a vein lets out the blood; so, when sin hath pricked the conscience it lets out the joy.

10. Affliction is a magnifying of a person, Job vii. 17. 'What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and visit him every morning?' That is, visit him with affliction.

Qu. *How doth afflictions magnify us?*

Ans. (1.) As they are signs of sonship, Heb. xii. 7. 'If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.' Every print of the rod is a badge of honour. (2.) As the sufferings of the godly have raised their fame and renown in the world; the zeal and constancy of the martyrs in their sufferings have eternized their name: O how eminent was Job for his patience! James v. 11. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job.' Job the sufferer was more renowned than Alexander the conqueror. Thus afflictions magnify a person, but sin doth not magnify but vilify him. When Eli's sons had sinned and profaned their priesthood, they turned their glory into shame; the text saith, 'They made themselves vile,' 1 Sam. iii. 13. Sin casts an indelible blot on a man's name, Prov. vi. 32, 33. 'Whoso commits adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.'

11. A man may suffer affliction, and bring honour to religion. Paul's iron chain made the gospel wear a gold chain; suffering credits and propagates the gospel; but committing of sin brings a dishonour and scandal upon the ways of God. Cyprian saith, when in the primitive times a virgin, who vowed herself to religion, had defiled her chastity, *totum ecclesiae cœtum erubescere*, shame and grief filled the face of the whole congregation. When scandalous sins are committed by a few, they bring a re-

proach upon all them that profess ; as three or four brads shillings in a sum of money make all the rest suspected.

12. When a man's afflictions are on a good account, that he suffers for Christ, he hath the prayers of God's people. 'Tis no small privilege to have a stock of prayer going ; it is like a merchant that hath a part in several ships : suffering saints have a large share in the prayers of others, Acts xii. 5. ' Peter was in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him.' What greater happiness than to have God's promises, and the saints' prayers ? but when a man sins presumptuously and scandalously, he hath the saints bitter tears and just censures : he is a burden to all that know him, as David speaks in another case, Psal. xxxi. 11. ' They that did see me without, fled from me.' So a scandalous sinner, the people of God flee from him, he is like an infected person, every one shuns and avoids him.

13. Affliction can hurt a man only while he is living, but sin doth hurt him when he is dead, As a man's virtues and alms may do good when he is dead, so a man's sins may do him mischief when he is dead. When a spider is killed, the poison of it may do hurt ; so the poison of an evil example may do much hurt, when a man is in his grave. Affliction at most can but last a man's life, but sin lives, and doth hurt, when he is gone. Thus you see sin is far worse than affliction.

*Secondly*, Sin is worse than death. Aristotle calls death the terrible of terribles, and Job calls it, ' the king of terrors,' Job xviii. 4. but sin is more deadly than death itself. (1.) Death, though it be painful, yet it were not hurtful but for sin ; it is sin that imbitters death and makes it sting, 1 Cor. xv. 56. ' The sting of death is sin.' Were it not for sin, though death might kill us, it could not curse us. Sin poisons death's arrow, so that sin is worse than death, because it puts a sting into death. (2.) Death doth but separate between the body and the soul : but sin, without repentance, separates between God and the soul, Judges xviii. 24. ' Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more ?' Death doth but take away our life from us, but sin takes away our God from us ; so that sin is worse than death.

*Thirdly*, Sin is worse than hell. In hell there is the worm and the fire, but sin is worse. (1.) Hell is of God's making, but sin is none of his making ; it is a monster of the devil's creating. (2.) The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner, but sin is a burden to God, Amos ii. 13. ' I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.' (3.) In hell torments there is something that is good ; there is the execution of God's justice, there is justice in hell ; but sin is the most unjust thing ; it would rob God of his glory, Christ of his

purchase, the soul of its happiness; so that it is worse than hell.

*5thly*, Look upon sin in the manner of its cure; it cost dear to be done away: the guilt of sin could not be removed but by the blood of Christ; he who was God must die, and be made a curse for us, before sin could be remitted. How horrid is sin, that no angel or arch-angel, nor all the powers of heaven, could procure the pardon of sin, but it cost the blood of God; If a man should commit an offence, and all the nobles should kneel upon their knees before the king for him; but no pardon could be had, unless the king's son be arraigned and suffer death for him; all must conceive it was an horrible fact that must be the cause of this; such is the case here, the Son of God must die to appease God's anger for our sins. O the agonies and sufferings of Christ! (1.) In his body; his head crowned with thorns, his face spit upon, his side pierced with the spear, his hands and feet nailed,—*Totum pro vulnere corpus*—(2.) He suffered in his soul, Mat. xxvi. 38. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.' He drank a bitter cup, mingled with curses; which made him, though he was sanctified by the Spirit, supported by the Deity, comforted by angels, sweat drops of blood, and cry out upon the cross, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' All this was to do away our sin. View sin in Christ's blood, and it will appear of a crimson colour.

*6thly*, Look upon sin in the dismal effects of it, and it will appear the most horrid prodigious evil, Rom. vi. 23. 'The wages of sin is death,' that is, the 'second death,' Rev. xxi. 8. Sin hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. A wicked man knows what sin is in the pleasure of it, but doth not know what sin is in the punishment of it. Sin is *Scorpio pungens*, it draws hell at the heels of it. This hellish torment consists of two parts;

1. *Pæna damni*, the punishment of loss, Mat. vii. 23. 'Depart from me.' It was a great trouble to Absalom, that he might not see the king's face; to lose God's smiles, to be banished from his presence, in whose presence is fulness of joy, how sad and tremendous! this word 'depart,' (saith Chrysostom) is worse than the fire. Sure sin must be the 'greatest evil,' which separates us from the 'greatest good.'

2. *Pæna sensus*, the punishment of sense, Mat. xxv. 41. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Why, might sinners plead, Lord, if we must depart from thee, let us have thy 'blessing:' no, 'Go, ye cursed:' but if we must depart from thee, let it be into some place of ease and rest; no, Go into fire. But, if we must into fire, let it be for a little time; let the fire be quickly put out; no, Go into everlasting fire: but if it be so, that we must be

there, let us be with good company, no, 'with the devil and his angels.' O what an evil is sin! all the torments of this life are but *hidibrium & risus*, a kind of sport to hell torments: what is a burning fever to the burning in hell! it is called 'the wrath of the Almighty,' Rev. xix. 15. The Almighty God inflicts the punishment, therefore it will be heavy. A child cannot strike very hard, but if a giant strike he kills with a blow: to have the Almighty God to lay on the stroke, it will be intolerable. Hell is the EMPHASIS of misery. The body and soul, which have sinned together, shall suffer together: and these torments shall have no period put to them, Rev. ix. 6. 'They shall seek death, and shall not find it.' Rev. xiv. 11. 'And the smoke of their torments ascendeth for ever and ever;' here the wicked thought a prayer long, a sabbath long; but how long will it be to lie upon beds of flames for ever? This word, ever, breaks the heart; thus you see sin is the most deadly and execrable evil: look upon it in its original, in its nature, in the judgment and estimate of the wise; look upon it comparatively, it is worse than affliction, death, hell; look upon it in the manner of cure, and in the dismal effect, it brings eternal damnation: is there not then a great deal of reason that we should make this prayer, 'deliver us from evil?'

*Use I. Branch I.* Is sin such a deadly, pernicious evil, the evil of evils? See then what it is we are to pray most to be delivered from, and that is from sin, our Saviour hath taught us to pray, 'deliver us from evil.' Hypocrites pray more against temporal evils than spiritual. Pharaoh prayed more to have the plague of hail and thunder to be removed, than his hard heart should be removed, Exod. ix. 28. The Israelites prayed, *tolle serpentes*, take away the serpents from us, more than to have their sin taken away, Numb. xxi. 8. The hypocrite's prayer is carnal, he prays more to be cured of his deafness and lameness, than of his unbelief: more that God would take away his pain, than take away his sin. But our prayer should be, 'deliver us from evil.' Spiritual prayers are best: hast thou a diseased body? pray more that the disease of thy soul may be removed, than thy body, Psal. xli. 4. 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned.' The plague of the heart is worse than a cancer in the breast, hast thou a child that is crooked? Pray more to have its unholiness removed than its crookedness: spiritual prayers are more pleasing to God, and are as music in his ears. Christ hath here taught us to pray against sin, 'deliver us from evil.'

*II. Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then admire the wonderful patience of God that bears with sinners. Sin is a breach of God's royal law, it strikes at his glory; now, for God to bear with sinners, who provoke him, it shews admirable patience;

well may he be called, 'the God of patience,' Rom. xv. 4, 5. It would tire the patience of the angels, to bear with men's sins one day; but what doth God bear? How many affronts and injuries doth he put up? God sees all the intrigues and horrid impieties committed in a nation, Jer. xxix. 23. 'They have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.' God could strike men 'dead in their sins;' but he forbears, and respites them. Methinks I see the justice of God with a flaming sword in his hand, ready to strike the stroke; and patience steps in for the sinner, Lord, spare him a while longer. Methinks I hear the angel saying to God, as the king of Israel to the prophet, 2 Kings vi. 21. 'Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?' Lord here is such a sinner, shall I smite him? Shall I take off the head of such a drunkard, swearer, sabbath-breaker? And God's patience saith, as the dresser of the vineyard, Luke xiii. 8. 'Let him alone this year.' O the infinite patience of God, that sin being so great an evil, and so contrary to God, he should bear with sinners so long! 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. 'If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?' God finds his enemies, yet he lets them go, he is not presently avenged on them. Every sin hath a voice to cry to God for vengeance; Sodom's sin cried, Gen. xviii. 20. Yet God spares men; but let not sinners presume upon God's patience: if they repent not, long forbearance is no forgiveness; God's patience abused will leave men more inexcusable.

III. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then there is no sin little. There is no little treason; every sin strikes at God's crown and dignity: and in this sense it may be said, as Job xxii. 5. 'Are not thy iniquities infinite?' The least sin (as the schoolmen say) is infinite objective, because it is committed against an infinite Majesty; and besides, nothing can do away sin, but that which hath an infiniteness in it; for though the sufferings of Christ (as man) were not infinite, yet the divine nature did shed forth an infinite value and merit upon his sufferings. So that as no sin is little, there is no little hell for sin. As we are not to think any of God's mercies little, because they are more than we can deserve; so neither are we to think any of our sins little, because they are more than we can answer for. That sin we esteem lightest, without Christ's blood will be heavy enough to sink us into perdition.

IV. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then see whence all personal or national troubles come; they come from the evil of sin; our sin grows high that makes our divisions grow wide; sin is the Achan that troubles us, it is the cockatrice egg, out of which comes a fiery flying serpent. Sin is like Phæton, who, as the poets feign, driving the chariot of the sun, set the

world on fire. Sin, like the planet Saturn, hath a malignant influence: sin brings us into straits, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. 'David said unto God, I am in a great strait.' Jer. iv. 17. 'As keepers of a field are they against her round about:' as horses or deer in a field are so inclosed with hedges, and so narrowly watched, that they cannot get out; so Jerusalem was so close besieged with enemies, and watched, that there was no escape for her: whence was this? ver. 18. 'This is thy wickedness.' All our evils are from the evil of sin. The cords that pinch us are of our own twisting. *Flagitium et flagellum sunt tanquam acus et filum.* Sin raiseth all the storms in conscience: the sword of God's justice lies quiet till sin draws it out of the scabbard, and makes God whet it against a nation.

V. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then how little reason hath any one to be in love with sin? some are so infatuated with sin, that they delight in it. The devil can so cook and dress sin, that it pleaseth the sinner's palate, Job xx. 12. 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth.' Sin is as delightful to corrupt nature, as meat to the taste. Sin is a feast on which men feed their lusts; but there is little cause to be so in love with sin, Job xx. 14. 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, it is the gall of asps within him.' To love sin, is to hug an enemy. Sin puts a worm into conscience, a sting into death, a fire into hell. Sin is like those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. 'On their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and they had tails like scorpions, and they had stings in their tails.' After the woman's hair comes in the scorpion's sting.

VI. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then what may we judge of them who make light of sin, as if there were no danger in it; as if God were not in earnest when he threatens sin; or as if ministers were about a needless work, when they preach against sin? Some people make nothing of breaking a commandment; they make nothing of telling a lie, of cozening, of flattering; nothing of living in the sin of uncleanness; if you weigh sin in the balance of some men's judgments, it weighs very light: but, who are those that make so very light of sin? Solomon hath described them, Prov. xix. 9. 'Fools make a mock of sin.' *Stultus in vitia cito dilabitur*, Isidor. Who but fools would make light of that which grieves the Spirit of God? Who but fools would put such a viperous sin in their bosom? Who but fools would laugh at their own calamity, and make sports while they give themselves poison.

VII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then I infer, that there is no good to be gotten by sin; of this thorn we cannot gather grapes.—If sin be so deadly an evil, then we cannot get

any profit by it ; no man did ever thrive upon this trade ; Those Atheists said, Mal. iii. 14. ' It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it ? ' But we may say more truly, what profit is there in sin ? Rom. vi. 21. ' What fruit had ye in these things, whereof ye are now ashamed ? ' Where are your earnings ? What have you gotten by sin ? It hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. What profit had Achan of his wedge of gold ? That wedge seemed to cleave asunder his soul from God. What profit had Ahab of the vineyard he got unjustly ? The dogs licked his blood, 1 Kings xxi. 19. What profit had Judas of his treason ? For thirty pieces he sold his Saviour, and bought his own damnation. All the gain men get by their sins, they may put in their eye ; nay, they must, and weep it out again.

VIII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, see then the folly of those who venture upon sin, because of the pleasure they have in it, 2 Thess. ii. 12. ' Who have pleasure in unrighteousness.' As for the pleasure of sin, (1.) It is but seeming, it is but a pleasant fancy, a golden dream. (2.) And besides, it is a mixed pleasure, it has bitterness intermingled, Prov. vii. 17. ' I have (saith the harlot) perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. For one sweet, here are two bitters ; cinnamon is sweet, but myrrh and aloes are bitter ; the harlot's pleasure is mixed. There are those inward fears and lashes of conscience, as imbitter the pleasure. 3. If there be any pleasure in sin, it is only to the body, the brutish part ; the soul is not at all gratified by the pleasure, Luke xii. 19. ' Soul, take thy ease ; ' he might have more properly said, ' Body, take thy ease ; ' the soul cannot feed on sensual objects. 4. In short, that pleasure men talk of in sin, is their disease. Some take pleasure in eating chalk or coals, this is from their disease ; so, when men talk of pleasure in eating the forbidden fruit, it is from the sickness and disease of their souls, ' they put bitter for sweet,' Isa. v. 20. O what folly is it, for a cup of pleasure, to drink a sea of wrath ? Sin will be bitter in the end, Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. ' Look not on the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup ; at last it bites like a serpent.' Sin will prove like Ezekiel's roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly, *mel in ore, fel in corde*. Ask Cain now, how he likes his murder ? Achan, how he likes his golden wedge ? O remember that saying of Austin, *Momentaneum est quod delectat, aeternum quod cruciat*. The pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.

IX. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then, what wisdom is it to depart from evil : Job xxviii. 28. ' To depart from evil is understanding.' To sin is to do foolishly ; therefore, to depart from sin, is to do wisely. Solomon saith, Prov. xxix.

6. 'In every transgression is a snare.' Is it not wisdom to avoid a snare? Sin is a deceiver, it cheated our first parents; instead of being as gods, they became as the beasts that perish, Ps. xlix. 29. Sin hath cheated all that have meddled with it, is it not wisdom to shun such a cheater? Sin hath many fair pleas, and tells how it will gratify all the senses with pleasure; But, saith a gracious soul, Christ's love is sweeter; peace of conscience is sweeter; what are the pleasures of sin to the pleasures of paradise? Well may the saints be called wise virgins, because they spy the deceits that are in sin, and avoid the snares. 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.'

X. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then, how justifiable and commendable are all those means which are used to keep men from sin? how justifiable are a minister's admonitions and reproofs? Tit. i. 13. 'Rebuke them sharply;' cuttingly; a metaphor from a chirurgeon that searches a wound, and cuts out the proud flesh, that the patient may be sound; so God's minister comes with a cutting reproof, but it is to keep you from sin, and to save your souls. *Si merito objurgaverit te aliquis, scito quia profuit*, Seneca. "Esteem them your best friends, who would keep you from sinning against God." If a man were going to poison or drown himself, were not he his friend who would hinder him from doing it? All a minister's reproofs are but to keep you from sin, and hinder you from self-murder; all is in love, 2 Cor. v. 11. 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' It is the passion of most to be angry with them that would reclaim them from sin, Amos v. 10. 'They hate him that rebuketh in the gate.' Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion, seeing it is to purge out the peccant humour? It is mercy to mens' souls to tell them of their sins. And surely those are priests for the devil, 2 Cor. xi. 15. who see men go on in sin, and ready to drop into hell, yet never pull them back by a reproof; nay, perhaps flatter them in their sins. God never made ministers as false glasses, to make bad faces look fair: such make themselves guilty of other men's sins.

XI. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, the evil of evils, then see what a bad choice they make, who choose sin to avoid affliction: as if, to save the coat from being rent, one should suffer his flesh to be rent. It was a false charge that Elihu brought against Job, chap. xxxvi. 21. 'Thou hast chosen iniquity rather than affliction.' This is a bad choice. Affliction hath a promise made to it, 2 Sam. xxii. 28. but sin hath no promise made to it. Affliction is for our good, but sin is not for our good; it would entail hell and damnation upon us. Spira chose iniquity rather than affliction, but it cost him dear; he at



last repented of his choice. He who commits sin to avoid suffering, is like one that runs into a lion's den to avoid the stinging of a gnat.

XII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, see then what should be a Christian's great care in this life to keep from sin; 'Deliver us from evil.' Some make it all their care to keep out of trouble; they had rather keep their skin whole, than their conscience pure: but our care should be chiefly to keep from sin. How careful are we to forbear such a dish, as the physicians tell us is hurtful for us: it will bring the stone or gout? Much more should we be careful that we eat not the forbidden fruit, which will bring divine vengeance, 1 Tim. v. 22. 'Keep thyself pure.' It hath always been the study of the saints to keep aloof off from sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Ps. xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' It was a saying of Anselm, If sin were on one side, and hell on the other, he would rather leap into hell than willingly sin against God. O what a mercy is it to be kept from sin! We count it a great mercy to be kept from the plague and fire; but what is it to be kept from sin?

XIII. *Branch.* Is sin so great an evil? see then that which may make us long for heaven, when we shall be perfectly freed from sin, not only from the outward acts of sin, but from the in-being of sin. In heaven we shall not need to pray this prayer, 'Deliver us from evil.' What a blessed time will it be, when we shall never have a vain thought more? Then Christ's spouse shall be *fine macula aut ruga*, without spot or wrinkle, Ephes. v. 27. Now there is a dead man tied to the living: we cannot do any holy duty, but we mix sin; we cannot pray without wandering; we cannot believe without doubting: but then, our virgin-souls shall not be capable of the least tincture of sin, but we shall all be as the angels of God.

In heaven we shall have no temptation to sin. The old serpent is cast out of paradise, and his fiery darts shall never come near to touch us.

*2d Use of exhortation.* And it hath two distinct branches.

I. *Branch.* To all in general. If sin be so great and prodigious an evil, then, as you love your souls take heed of sin. If you taste of the forbidden fruit, it will cost you dear, it will cost you bitter tears, it may cost you lying in hell; O therefore flee from sin.

(1.) Take heed of sins of omission, Mat. xxiii. 23. It is as well dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden. Some think it no great matter to omit reading scripture: the Bible lies by like rusty armour, which they never use: they think it no great matter to omit family or closet-

prayer; they can go several months, and God never hear of them. These have nothing sanctified to them; they feed upon a curse; 'for every creature is sanctified by prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5. The bird may shame many, it never takes a drop, but the eye is lifted up towards heaven. O take heed of living in the neglect of any known duty. It was the prayer of a reverend holy man on his death-bed, 'Lord, forgive my sins of omission.'

(2.) Take heed of secret sins. Some are more modest than to sin openly in a balcony; but they will carry their sins under a canopy, they will sin in secret. Rachel did not let her father's images be seen, 'but she put them under her, and sat upon them,' Gen. xxxi. 34. Many will be drunk, and unclean, if they may do it when no body may see them; they are like one that shuts up his shop windows, but follows his trade within doors. But if sin be so great an evil, let me warn you this day, not to sin in secret: Know, that you can never sin so privately, but that there are two witnesses always by, God and conscience.

(3.) Take heed of your complexion-sin, that sin which your nature and constitution doth most incline you to. As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin, Pf. xviii. 23. 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.' There is some sin that is a special favourite, the *peccatum in deliciis*, the darling-sin that lies in the bosom, and this doth bewitch and draw away the heart. O beware of this.

Qu. *How may this darling-sin be known?*

Ans. 1. That sin which a man doth most cherish, and to which all other sins are subservient; that is the sin which is most tended and waited upon: the Pharisees darling-sin was vain-glory, all they did was to feed this sin of pride, Matth. vi. 2. 'That they may have glory of men;' when they gave alms, they sounded a trumpet. If a stranger had asked the question, Why doth this trumpet sound? The answer was, the Pharisees are going to give alms to the poor. Their lamp of charity was filled with the oil of vain-glory, Matth. xxiii. 5. all their works for to be seen of men. Pride was their bosom-sin. Oftentimes covetousness is the darling-sin; all other sins are committed to maintain this. Why do men equivocate, oppress, defraud, take bribes? All is to uphold covetousness.

2. That sin which a man doth not love to have reprov'd, is the darling-sin: Herod could not endure to have his incest spoken against: if John Baptist meddles with that sin, it shall cost him his head.

3. That sin which hath most power over one, and doth most easily lead him captive, that is the beloved of the soul. There are some sins a man can better put off, and give a repulse to: but there is one sin, which, if it comes to be a suiter, he cannot

deny, but is overcome by it ; this is the bosom-sin. The young man in the gospel had a complexion-sin which he could not resist, and that was the love of the world ; his silver was dearer to him than his Saviour. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a lust, that he will part with the kingdom of heaven to gratify it.

4. That sin which men use arguments to defend, is the darling-sin. To plead for sin, is to be the devil's attorney ; if the sin be covetousness, and we vindicate it ; if it be rash anger, and we justify it, Jonah iv. 9. ' I do well to be angry : ' this is the complexion-sin.

5. That sin which doth most trouble one, and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the beloved sin. When Joseph's brethren were distressed, their sin came to remembrance in selling their brother, Gen. xii. 2. So, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, Dost not thou remember how thou hast lived in such a sin, though thou hast been often warned, yet thou wouldst not leave it ? Conscience reads a curtain-lecture ; sure that was the darling-sin.

6. That sin which a man is most unwilling to part with, that is the darling-sin. Jacob could of all his sons, most hardly part with Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 36. ' Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away.' So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have parted with ; but must Benjamin go ? must I part with this delightful sin ? that goes to the heart. This is the Dalilah, the beloved sin. O if sin be such a deadly evil, dare not to indulge any bosom-sin : this is of all the most dangerous : like an humour striking to the heart, which is mortal. Leave open but one gap, the wild beast may enter at it : one darling sin lived in, is setting open a gap for Satan to enter.

(4.) Take heed of the sins which attend your particular callings. A calling you must live in ; Adam in Paradise tilled the ground ; God never sealed warrants to idleness ; but every calling hath its snare : as some sin in living out of a calling, so others sin in a calling. Remember how deadly an evil sin is ; avoid those sins which you may be exposed to in your trade ; take heed of all fraud and collusion in your dealings, Matth. vii. 19. ' Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'

1. Take heed of a deceitful tongue in selling : the scripture makes it the character of one that goes to heaven, Psa. xv. 2. ' He speaketh the truth from his heart.' It is the custom of many to say, the commodity stands them more, yet take less. This is hardly credible.

2. Beware of a deceitful balance, Hof. xii. 7. ' The balances of deceit are in his hand.' Men, by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier.

3. Beware of sophisticating, mingling and embasing commodities, Amos viii. 6. 'They sell the refuse of the wheat.' They would pick out the best grains of the wheat, and sell the worst at the same price as they did the best : to mix a coarser commodity with a fine, and yet sell it all for fine, is no better than deceit, Isa. i. 2.

4. Beware of stretching your consciences too far, or taking more for a commodity than it is worth, Lev. xxv. 14. If thou sellest ought unto thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.' There is a lawful gain allowed, yet one may not so advantage himself as to damnify another. Let that be the tradesman's motto, Acts xxiv. 16. 'A conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.' He hath an hard bargain, that doth 'purchase the world with the loss of his soul.'

5. Sin being so deadly an evil, 'take heed of the appearance of sin.' Abstain not only from apparent evil, but the appearance of evil ; if it be not absolutely a sin, yet if it looks like sin, avoid it. He who is loyal to his prince, not only forbears to have his hand in treason, but he will take heed of that which hath a shew of treason. Joseph's mistress tempted him, and he fled and would not be with her, Gen. xxxix. 12. An appearance of good is too little, and an appearance of evil is too much.

(1.) The appearance of evil is oft an occasion of evil : dalliance is an appearance of evil, and oftentimes it occasions evil. Touching the forbidden fruit, may occasion tasting : dancing in masquerades, hath often been the occasion of uncleanness.

(2.) The appearance of evil may scandalize another, 1 Cor. viii. 12. When ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ : sinning against a member of Christ, is a sinning against Christ.

Thus you see, sin being so deadly an evil, we should avoid all sin ; sins of omission, secret sins, complexion-sins, sins that attend our particular calling, yea, the appearance of evil.

Qu. *What means shall we use to be kept from the acts of sin ?*

Ans. 1. If you would be preserved from actual and scandalous sins, labour to mortify original sin. If you would not have the branches bud and blossom, smite at the root. I know original sin cannot in this life be removed, but labour to have it subdued. Why do men break forth into actual sins, but because they do not mortify heart sins ? Suppress the first risings of pride, lust, passion ; original sin unmortified, will prove such a root of bitterness, as will bring the cursed fruit of scandalous sin.

2. If you would be kept from actual sins, think what an odious thing sin is. Besides what you have heard, remember, sin is the accursed thing, Josh. vii. 21. It is the abominable

thing God hates, Jer. xlv. 4. 'O do not this abominable thing that I hate.' Sin is the spirit of witchcraft; it is the devil's excrement; it is called filthiness, James i. 21. If all the evils in the world were put together, and their quintessence strained out, they could not make a thing so filthy as sin doth. So odious is a sinner, that God lothes the sight of him, Zech. xi. 8. 'My soul lothed them.' He who defiles himself with avarice, what is he but a serpent licking the dust? He who defiles himself with the lust of uncleanness, what is he but a swine with a man's head? He who defiles himself with pride, what is he but a bladder, which the devil hath blown up? He who defiles himself with drunkenness, what is he but a beast that hath got the staggers? To consider how odious and base a thing sin is, would be a mean to keep us from sinning.

3. If you would be kept from actual sins, get the fear of God planted in your hearts, Prov. xvi. 6. 'By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.' *Cavebis si pavebis*; fear is a bridle to sin, and a spur to holiness. Fear puts an holy awe upon the heart, and binds it to its good behaviour. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. When the empress Eudoxia, threatened to banish Chrysostom, "Tell her (saith he) I fear nothing but sin." Fear is *janitor animae*: it stands as a porter at the door of the soul, and keeps sin from entering: all sin is committed for want of the fear of God, Rom. iii. 14. 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; there is no fear of God before their eyes.' Holy fear stands centinel, and is ever watching against security, pride, wantonness. Fear is a Christian's life-guard, to defend him against the fiery darts of temptation. *Si vis esse securus, semper time*. The way to be safe, is always to fear, Prov. ii. 14.

(4.) If we would be kept from actual sins, let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin; run not into evil company; he that would not have the plague, will not go into an infected house. Guard your senses, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the eye and the ear; especially, look to your eye; much sin comes in by the eye, the eye is oft an inlet to sin, sin takes fire at the eye: the first sin in the world began at the eye, Gen. iii. 6. 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was pleasant to the eyes, then she took of the fruit thereof.' Looking begat lusting. Intemperance begins at the eye: looking on the wine when it is red, and gives its colour in the glass, causeth excess of drinking, Prov. xxi. 31. Covetousness begins at the eye, Josh. vii. 21. 'When I saw among the spoils, a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, I coveted and took them.' The fire of lust begins to kindle at the eye; 'David walking upon the roof of his house, saw a woman washing herself, and she was (saith the

text) beautiful to look upon, and he sent messengers and took her, and defiled himself with her,' 2 Sam. xi. 2. O therefore look to your eyes, 'Job made a covenant with his eyes,' Job xxxi. 1. If the eye be once inflamed, it will be hard to stand out long against sin: if the out-works are taken by the enemy, there is great danger of taking the whole castle.

5. If you would be kept from actual gross sin, study sobriety and temperance, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Sobrii este*, be sober. Check the inordinancy of appetite; sin doth frequently make its entrance this way. By gratifying the sensual appetite, the soul, that is a-kin to angels, is enslaved to the brutish part. Many drink, if not to drunkenness, yet to drowsiness. The not denying the sensitive appetite, makes men's conscience so full of guilt, and the world so full of scandal. If you would be kept from running into sin, lay restraint upon the flesh. What hath God given reason and conscience for, but to be a bridle to check inordinate desires?

6. If you would be kept from actual sins, be continually upon your spiritual watch.

(1.) Watch your thoughts, Jer. iv. 14. 'How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?' Sin begins at the thoughts. First, men cherish revengeful thoughts, then they dip their hands in blood. Set a spy over your thoughts.

(2.) Watch your passions: Passions of anger, passions of lust. The heart is ready to be destroyed by its own passions, as the vessel is to be overturned by the sail. Passion transports beyond the bounds of reason; it is *brevis insania*, Seneca. A short frenzy. Moses, in a passion, spake unadvisedly with his lips, Ps. cvi. 3. The disciples, in a passion, called for fire from heaven. A man in a passion is like a ship in a storm, that hath neither pilot nor sails to help it, but is exposed to the waves and rocks.

(3.) Watch your temptations. Satan continually lies in ambush, and watcheth to draw us to sin: *fiat in procinctu diabolus*: he is fishing for our souls: he is either laying of snares, or shooting of darts; therefore we had need watch the tempter, that we be not decoyed into sin. Most sin is committed for want of watchfulness.

7. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, consult with the oracles of God, be well versed in scripture, Ps. cxix. 11. 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' The word is, *anceps gladius*, a two-edged sword, to cut asunder men's lusts. When the fogs and vapours of sin begin to arise, let but the light of scripture shine into the soul, and it dispels those fogs; 'let the word of Christ dwell richly in you,' Col. iii. 26. Alphonfus, king of Arragon, read over the Bible fourteen times. The word shews the damnable evil of sin, it fur-

nisheth us with precepts, which are so many receipts and antidotes against sin. When Christ had a temptation to sin, he beat back the tempter, and wounded him three times with this sword of the Spirit, 'It is written.'

Why do men live in sin, but because they either do not read the word, or do not believe it?

8. If you would be preserved from gross presumptuous sin, get your hearts fired with love to God. Love hath great force in it, it is 'strong as death;' it breaks the league between the heart and sin.

Two things in God cause love.

(1.) His 'orient beauty:' Moses desired to see some glimpse of it; 'Lord, shew me thy glory.'

(2.) His amazing love: what a prodigy of love was it, to give his Son out of his bosom, and lay such a jewel to pawn for our redemption! these two, the orient of God's beauty, and the magnitude of his love, may, like two loadstones, draw our love to God, and if we love him, we will not sin against him; he that loves his friend, will not by any means displease him. I have read of four men, meeting together, who asked one another, what it was that kept them from sinning? One said, the fear of hell; another said the joys of heaven; the third said, the odiousness of sin; the fourth said, that which keeps me from sin, is, love to God; shall I sin against so good a God? shall I abuse love? Love to God is the best curbing-bit to keep from sin.

9. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, be diligent in a calling. *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.*—Adam in paradise must till the ground. Such as live idly, expose themselves to sin; if we have no work to do, Satan will find us work; he sows most of his seed in fallow ground. A woman being much tempted to sin, came to the Rev. Mr. Greenham for advice, what she should do to resist the temptation? He gave her this answer, be always well employed, that so when Satan comes, he may find thee busied in thy calling, and thou mayest not be at leisure to listen to his temptations.

10. If you would be kept from sin, fix the eye of your mind upon the 'beauty of holiness.' Holiness consists in our conformity to God: Holiness is the sparkling of the divine nature, a beam of God shining in the soul. How lovely is Christ's bride, when decked and bespangled with the jewels of holiness? What makes the seraphims angels of light, but their holiness? Do but think with yourselves what a splendid, glorious thing holiness is, and it will cause a disgust and hatred of sin, which is so contrary to it. The beholding of beauty, makes one out of love with deformity.

11. If you would keep from the evil of sin, meditate fre-

quently on death, *First*, the unavoidable-ness of it, Heb. ix. 27. *Statutum est*, 'It is appointed for all men once to die.' We are not so sure to lie down this night in bed, as we are to lie down in the grave. *Secondly*, The uncertainty of the time. We are but tenants at will : we hold our life at the will of our landlord, and how soon may God turn us out of this house of clay ? Death oft comes when we least look for it. The flood (as some learned writers observe) came in the month of *Ziph* or April, in the spring ; when the trees were blossoming, and the birds singing, then came the flood, when they least looked for it : so, oft in the spring of youth, when the body is most healthy and the spirits most sprightly and vigorous, and death is least thought on, then it comes. Could we think often and seriously of death, it would give a death's-wound to sin. *Nihil sit revocato peccata quam crebra mortis contemplatio.* Aug. No stronger antidote against sin than this ; I am now singing, and to-morrow may be dying ? What, if death should take me doing the devil's work, would it not send me to him to receive my wages ? Would but the adulterer think, I am now in the act of sin, but how soon may death come, and then I who have burned in lust, must burn in hell : this sure would strike a damp into him, and make him afraid of going after strange flesh.

12. If you would be kept from gross scandalous sins, beware of a covetous heart. Covetousness is a dry drunkenness. He who thirsts insatiably after the world, will stick at no sin, he will betray Christ and a good cause for money. *Cui nihil satis, eidem nihil turpe*, Tacitus. 1 Tim. vi. 10. 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' From this root comes, *First*, theft. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, Josh. vii. 21. Covetousness makes the goals so full. *Secondly*, From this root comes murder. Why did Ahab stone Naboth to death, but to possess his vineyard ? 1 Kings xxi. 13. Covetousness hath made many swim to the crown in blood. *Thirdly*, From this bitter root of covetousness proceeds cozenage : it is the covetous hand holds false weights. *Fourthly*, From this root of covetousness comes uncleanness. You read of the hire of a whore, Deut. xxiii. 18. For money she would let both her conscience and chastity be set to sale. O if you would be kept from the evil of sin, beware of covetousness which is the inlet to so many sins. 13. Let us be much in prayer to God, to keep us from ingulphing ourselves in sin, Ps. xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' We have no power inherent to keep ourselves from evil. Arnoldus saith, that man, in his corrupt estate, hath *aliquas reliquias vitæ spiritualis*—some reliques of spiritual life left. And Arminius saith, man hath a sufficiency of grace in himself, whereby he may *abstinere a malo*, abstain from evil ; free-will is a sufficient



curb to check and pull him back from sin. But then what needed Christ to have taught us this prayer ; *Libera nos a malo*, ' Deliver us from evil ? ' If we have power of ourselves to keep from sin, what need we pray to God for power ? Alas ! if David and Peter, who had an habit of grace, fell, for want of a fresh gale of the Spirit to hold them up, much more will they be in danger of falling, who have only the power of free-will to hold them.

Let us therefore sue to God for strength to keep us from sinning : pray that prayer of David, Ps. cxix. 117. ' Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.' And that other prayer, Ps. xvii. 5. ' Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.' ' Lord, keep me from dishonouring thee,' keep me from the defiling sins of the age, that I may not be the worse for the times, nor the times the worse for me. ' Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' Lord, whatever I suffer, keep me from sin. The child is safe in the nurse's arms ; and we are only safe from falling into sin, while we are held up in the arm's of Christ and free grace.

II. *Branch* of the exhortation hath an aspect to God's children. You that are professors, and carry Christ's colours, I beseech you, above all others, to take heed of sin ; beware of any action that is scandalous and unbecoming the gospel : you have heard what a prodigious hyperbolical evil sin is. Come not near the forbidden fruit, Hos. iv. 15. ' Though Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend.' So, though wicked men run into sin, yet let not the spouse of Christ defile the breasts of her virginity. Sin doth ill become any, but doth worse become professors. Dung is unhandsome in the street ; but to see it in the temple, how offensive is it ? Leprosy in the foot doth ill, but to see a leprous sore in the face is much worse ; to see sin break forth in them who have a face of religion, is most to be abominated. The sins of the wicked are not so much wondered at, Dan. xii. 10. ' The wicked shall do wickedly.' It is no wonder to see a toad spit poison. It was not so much wonder to see Cain or Ahab sin : but to see Lot's incest, to see David's hands stained with blood, this was strange. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it ; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse.

The sins of God's people do, in some sense, more provoke God than the sins of the wicked. We read of the provokings of his sons and daughters, Deut. xxxii. 19. The sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of his people grieve him. The sins of God's people have a more malignant aspect, and are of a blacker dye than others ; there are those aggravations in the

Gins of God's people, as are not to be found in the Gins of the unregenerate, in eight particulars.

For, 1. The godly have something which may *ponere obicem*, restrain them from sin. Wicked men, when they sin, have no principle to restrain them; they have wind and tide to carry them, but have nothing to pull them back from sin; but a child of God hath a principle of grace to give check to sin; he hath the impulses of God's Spirit dissuading him from evil; therefore, for him to commit sin, is far worse than for others: this is to sin more desperately; it is as if a woman should go about to kill in her womb. Christian, this thou art to do, when thou sinnest presumptuously, thou dost what in thee lies to kill the babe of grace in thy soul.

2. The Gins of God's people are greater than others, because they sin against more mercy. This is like a weight put in the scale, it makes sin weigh heavier. God hath given Christ to a believer; he hath cut him off from the wild stock of nature, and grafted him into the true olive; and for him to abuse all this mercy, it is to outdo the wicked, and to sin with an higher aggravation, because it is to sin against greater love. How was Peter's sin enhanced and accented; that when Christ had done more for him than others, he had dropped some of the holy oil upon him, he had taken him into the number of the apostles, he had carried him up into the mount of transfiguration, and shewn him the glory of heaven in a vision; now, that Peter should deny Christ after all this mercy, this was heinous, and could not be forgiven, but by a miracle and prodigy of love.

3. The Gins of the godly are worse, and have this aggravation in them, that they sin against more clear illuminations than the wicked, Job xxiv. 13. They are of those that rebel against the light: light is there taken figuratively for knowledge. It cannot be denied but the wicked sin knowingly: but the godly have a light beyond them, such a divine penetrating light, as no hypocrite can attain unto: they have better eyes to see sin than others: and for them to meddle with sin, and embrace this dunghill, how must this needs provoke God, and make the fury rise up in his face? Oh therefore, you that are the people of God, flee from sin; your Gins are more enhanced, and have worse aggravations in them than the Gins of the unregenerate.

4. The Gins of the godly are worse than the Gins of the unregenerate; for, when they sin, it is against great experiences. They have felt the bitterness of sin in the pangs of the new birth, and afterwards God hath spoken peace, and they have had an experimental taste how 'sweet the Lord is;' and yet, after these experiences, that they should touch the forbidden fruit, venture upon a presumptuous sin, how doth this enhance and aggravate their guilt, and is like putting a weight more in

the scale to make their sin weigh heavier? The wicked, when they sin, never tasted the sweetness of an heavenly life; they never knew what it was to have any smiles from God; they never tasted any thing sweeter than corn and wine, therefore no wonder if they sin: but for a child of God, who hath had such love tokens from heaven, and signal experiences from God, for him to gratify a lust, how horrid is this! it was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, that his heart was turned from the Lord which had appeared to him twice, 1 Kings xi. 9.

5. The sins of the godly are greater than others, because they sin against their sonship. When wicked men sin, they sin against the command: but when the godly sin, they sin against a privilege, they abuse their sonship. The godly are adopted into the family of heaven, they have a new name: Is it a light thing (said David) to be son-in-law to a king? So, to be called the sons of God, to be heirs of the promises, is no small honour: now, for such to run into an open offence, it is a sinning against their adoption; they hereby make themselves vile, as if a king's son should be tumbling in the mire, or lie among swine.

6. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they are committed against more vows and engagements. They have given up their names to God; they have bound themselves solemnly to God by oath, Pl. cxix. 106. 'I have sworn that I will keep thy statutes.' And in the supper of the Lord they have renewed this sacred vow; and, after this, to run into a presumptuous sin, it is a breach of vow, a kind of perjury, which dyes the sin of a crimson colour.

7. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they bring a greater reproach upon religion. For the wicked to sin, there is no other expected from them; swine will wallow in the mire; but when sheep do so, when the godly sin, that redounds to the dishonour of the gospel, 2 Sam. xii. 24. 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.' A stain in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it: for the godly to sin, it is like a spot in scarlet, it is more taken notice of, and it reflects a greater dishonour upon the ways of God. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse. How doth the gospel suffer by the miscarriages of the godly? Their blood never can wash off the stain that they bring upon religion.

8. The sins of the godly are worse, because they are a mean to encourage and harden wicked men in sin. If the wicked see the godly to be loose and uncircumspect in their lives, they think they may do so too: The wicked make the godly their pattern, not in imitating their virtues, but their vices; and is not this fearful, to be a mean to damn others? These are the

aggravations of the sins of the godly : therefore you, above all others, beware of presumptuous sin : your sins wound conscience, weaken grace, and do more highly provoke God than the sins of others, and God will be sure to punish you : whoever escapes, you shall not, Amos iii. 3. ‘ You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’ If God doth not damn you, yet he may send you to hell in this life : he may cause such agonies and tremblings of heart, that you will be a terror to yourselves ; you may draw nigh to despair, and be ready to look upon yourselves as cast-aways. When David had stained himself with adultery and murder, he complained of his broken bones, Psal. li. 8. A metaphor, to set forth the grief and agony of his soul : he lay in fore desertion three quarters of a year, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to his dying day. Oh therefore, you who belong to God, and are enrolled in his family, take heed of blemishing your profession with scandalous sin ; you will pay dear for it ; think of the broken bones : though God doth not blot you out of his book, yet he may cast you out of his presence, Psal. li. 11. He may keep you in long desertion. You may feel such lashes in your conscience, [that you may roar out, and think yourselves half in hell.]

So much for the first, ‘ Deliver us from evil :’ we pray to be delivered from evil, in general, that is sin.

*Secondly*, In special. ‘ Deliver us from evil.’ We pray to be delivered from evil, under a threefold notion. (1.) From the evil of our heart. It is called an evil heart, Heb. iii. 12. (2.) From the evil of Satan. He is called ‘ the evil one,’ Matth. xiii. 19. (3.) From the evil of the world. It is called an ‘ evil world,’ Gal. i. 4.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, In this petition, ‘ deliver us from evil,’ we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not decoy and trepan us into sin. The heart is the poisoned fountain, from whence all actual sins flow, Mark vii. 21. ‘ Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornications, murders.’ The cause of all evil lies in a man’s own breast, all sin begins at the heart. Lust is first conceived in the heart, and then it is midwived into the world. Whence comes rash anger ? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is a shop or work-house, where all sin is contrived and hammered out : how needful therefore is this prayer, ‘ deliver us from evil,’ from the evil of our hearts ? The heart is the greatest seducer, therefore the apostle James saith, ‘ every man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,’ James i. 14. The devil could not hurt us, if our own hearts did not give consent. All that he can do is, to lay the bait, but it is our fault to swallow the bait.

O let us pray to be delivered from the lusts and deceits of

our own heart, 'Deliver us from evil.' Luther feared his heart more than the pope or cardinal, and it was Austin's prayer, *libera me, Domine, a meipso*; Lord deliver me from myself. It was a good advice one gave to his friend, *Caveas teipsum*. Beware of the bosom traitor, the flesh. The heart of man is the Trojan horse, out of which comes a whole army of lusts.

2dly, In this petition 'deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of Satan. He is 'the evil one,' Matt. xiii. 19.

Qu. *In what respect is Satan the evil one?*

Ans. 1. He was the first inventor of evil, John viii. 44. 'He plotted the first treason.'

2. His inclination is only to evil, Eph. vi. 12.

3. His constant practice in doing evil, 1 Pet. v. 8.

4. All the evils and mischiefs that fall out in the world, he hath some hand in them.

(1.) He hinders from good, Zech. iii. 1. 'He shewed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan at his right-hand to resist him.'

(2.) He provokes to evil; he put it into Ananias' heart to lie, Acts v. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' the devil blows the fire of lust and strife. When men are proud, the old serpent hath poisoned them, and makes them swell. Thus he is the evil one; and well may we pray, 'Lord, deliver us from the evil one.' The word Satan in the Hebrew signifies an opponent or adversary.

1. He is a restless adversary, he never sleeps; spirits need no sleep. He is a peripatetic, 'He walks about,' 2 Pet. v. 8. And, how doth he walk? not as a pilgrim, but as a spy; he narrowly observes where he may plant his pieces of battery, and make his assaults with most advantage against us. Satan is a subtil engineer; there is no place that can secure us from Satan's assaults and inroads. We find him while we are praying, hearing, meditating. We are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it.

2. Satan is a puissant adversary, he is armed with power. He is called the 'strong man,' Luke xi. 21. He takes men captive at his pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26. 'Who are taken captive by him at his will,' who are taken alive by him. It alludes to a bird that is taken alive in the snare; thus you see he is the evil one. The devil's work is to angle for mens' souls; he lays suitable baits; he allures the ambitious man with honour, the covetous man with riches: he baits his hooks with silver; he allures the lustful man with beauty, he tempts men to Dalilah's lap to keep them from Abraham's bosom. The devil glories in the damnation of souls. How needful then is this prayer, 'Deliver us from evil?' Lord, keep us from the evil one; though

Satan may solicit to sin, suffer us not to give consent; though he may assault the castle of our hearts, yet let us not deliver up the keys of the castle to our mortal enemy.

*3dly*, In this petition, 'Deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of the world. It is called an evil world, Gal. i. 4. not but that the world, as God made it, is good, but through our corruption it becomes evil, and we had need pray, deliver us from an evil world.

*Qu. In what sense is it an evil world?*

*Ans.* 1. As it is a defiling world. It is like living in an infectious air, it requires an high degree of grace to 'keep ourselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 27. It is as hard to live in the world and not be defiled, as to go much in the sun and not be tanned.

(1.) The opinions of the world are defiling; that a little religion will serve the turn; like leaf-gold, it must be spread but thin; that morality runs parallel with grace: that to be zealous, is to be righteous over-much. That it is better to keep the skin whole than the conscience pure: that the flesh is rather to be gratified than mortified. These opinions of the world are defiling.

(2.) The examples of the world are defiling examples, have a great force in them to draw us to evil,—*Princeps imperio magnus exemplo major*, Princes are looking-glasses which we dress ourselves by; if they do evil, we are apt to imitate them. Great men are copies we set before us, and usually we write most like the copy when it is blotted. There is a great proneness in us to follow the example of the world; therefore God hath put in a caveat against it, Exod. xxiii. 2. 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' How easily are we hurried to sin, when we have the tide of natural corruption, and the wind of example to carry us? Lot was the world's wonder; the complexion of his soul kept pure in Sodom's infectious air. The river of Peru in America, after it hath run into the main sea, keeps fresh, and doth not mingle with the salt waters; to this river might Lot be compared, whose piety kept fresh in Sodom's salt water. Bad examples are catching, Ps. cvi. 35. 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' Had not we need then to pray, Lord, deliver us from this evil world? Living in the world is like travelling in a dirty road.

2. It is an evil world, as it is an ensnaring world. The world is full of snares. Company is a snare, recreation is a snare, oaths are snares, riches are golden snares;—*Opes irritamenta malorum*. The apostle speaks of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16. The lust of the flesh is beauty, the lust of the eye is money, the pride of life is

honour ; these are the natural man's trinity, *In mundo splendor opum, gloriæ majestas voluptatum illecebræ ab amore Dei nos astrahunt*. The world is a flattering enemy, whom it kisses, it oft betrays ; it is a silken halter : the pleasures of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of security. Lyfimachus sold his crown for a draught of water ; so many part with heaven for the world. It is an ensnaring world : the king of Armenia was sent prisoner to queen Cleopatra in golden fetters : too many are enslaved with the world's golden fetters. The world bewitched Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity, and not be giddy. Thus the world, through our innate corruption, is evil, as it is a snare, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ' They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare.' If an angel were to live here there were no danger of the world's ensnaring him, because he hath no principle within to receive the temptation : but we have a corrupt principle that suits with the temptation, and that makes us always in danger.

3. It is an evil world, as it is a discouraging world. It casts scorn and reproach upon them who live virtuously ; what, will you be holier than others, wiser than your ancestors ? The world deals with the professors of religion, as Sanballat did with the Jews when they were building, Neh. iv. 1. ' He mocked the Jews, and said, What do these feeble Jews ? Will they fortify themselves ? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish that are burnt ?' So the wicked world casts out squibs of reproach at the godly, what, will ye build for heaven ? What needs all this cost ? What profit is it to serve the Almighty ? thus the world will pluck off our chariot-wheels when we are driving towards heaven : they are called cruel mockings, Heb. xi. 36. It requires a great measure of sanctity to withstand the discouragements of the world, to dance among serpents, to laugh at reproaches, and bind them as a crown about our head.

4. It is an evil world, as it is a deadning world. It dulls and deadneth the affections to heavenly objects. The world cools holy motions, like a damp in a silver-mine, which puts out the light : earthly things choke the seed of the word. A man entangled in the world is so taken up about secular concerns, that he can no more mind the things above, than the earth can ascend, or the elephant fly in the air : and, even such as have grace in them, yet, when their affections are belimed with the earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer : it is like swimming with a stone about the neck.

5. It is an evil world, as it is a maligning world. It doth disgust and hate the people of God, John xv. 19. ' Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Hatred is (as Aristotle saith) against the whole kind. Haman's hatred

was against the seed of the whole Jews. When you can find a serpent without a sting, or a leopard without spots, then you may expect to find a wicked world without hatred. The white that is shot at is piety, Pl. xxxviii. 20. 'They are mine adversaries, because I follow the thing that is good.' The world pretends to hate the godly for something else, but the ground of the quarrel is holiness. The world's hatred is implacable : anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot ; you may as well reconcile heaven and hell, as the two seeds. If the world hated Christ, no wonder it hates us, John xv. 18. 'The world hated me before it hated you.' Why should any hate Christ ? This blessed Dove had no gall, this Rose of Sharon did send forth a most sweet perfume, but this shews the world's baseness, it is a Christ-hating and a saint-hating world. Had not we need to pray, deliver us from this evil world ?

6. It is an evil world, as it is a deceitful world.

(1.) There is a deceit in dealing, Hos. xii. 7. 'He is a merchant, the ballances of deceit are in his hand.' The Hebrew word *rimmah in pihil*, signifies both to deceive and oppress. He who dares use deceit, will not spare to oppress.

(2.) There is a deceit in friendship, Prov. xx. 6. 'But a faithful man who can find ?'

—*Trita frequensque via est per amici fallere nomen*—

Some use too much courtship in friendship, they are like trumpets which make a great noise, but within they are hollow. Some can flatter and hate, commend and censure. *Miel in ore, fel in corde*. Dissembled love is worse than hatred.

(3.) There is a deceit in riches, Matth. xiii. 22. 'The deceitfulness of riches.' The world makes us believe it will satisfy our desires, and it doth but increase them ; it makes us believe it will stay with us, and it takes wings, Prov. xxiii. 5.

7. It is an evil world, as it is a disquieting world. It is full of trouble, John xvi. 33. The world is like a bee-hive ; when we have tasted a little honey, we have been stung with a thousand bees. St. Basil was of opinion, that before the fall, the rose did grow without prickles : but now every sweet flower of our life hath its prickles. There are many things cause disquiet ; loss of friends, law-suits, crosses in estate : relations are not without their troubles : some are troubled that they want children, others troubled that they have children : the world is a vexing vanity. If a man be poor, he is despised by the rich ; if he be rich, he is envied by the poor. If we do not find it an enlivening world, we shall find it an afflicting world ; it hath more in it to wean us than tempt us. The world is a sea, where we are tossed upon the surging waves of sorrow, and often in danger of shipwreck ; the world is a wilderness full of fiery serpents. [What storms of persecution are raised against



the righteous?' 2 Tim. iii. 12.] The wicked are briars, Mic. vii. 4. where Christ's sheep lose some of their golden fleece. Then had we not need pray, Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world? Why should we love the world? Though we are commanded to love our enemies, yet this enemy we must not love, 1 John. ii. 15. 'Love not the world.'

I have been all this while opening the first sense of this petition, 'Deliver us from evil;' we pray to be delivered from sin in general, and to be delivered from evil under this threefold notion, from the evil of our heart, from the evil of Satan, from the evil of the world. Ere I leave this, let me insert a

*Caution.* Not that our abstaining from, or forbearing the external acts of sin, is sufficient to entitle us to salvation: but when we pray, 'Deliver us from evil,' there is more implied in it, namely, that we make a progress in holiness. Being divorced from sin is not enough, unless we are espoused to virtue; therefore in scripture these two are joined, Psal. xxxiv. 14. 'Depart from evil, and do good.' Rom. xii. 9. and Isa. i. 16. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.' Leaving sin is not enough, unless we embrace righteousness. *Virtutis est magis honesta agere, quam non turpia.* As it is in the body, it is not enough that the disease be stopped, but it must grow in health; so it is in the soul, it is not enough acts of sin be forborne, (which is the stopping a disease) but it must be healthy, that is, grow in holiness.

*Use.* Which reproves those who labour only to suppress the outward acts of sin, but do not press on to holiness; they cease from doing evil, but do not learn to do well. Their religion lies only in negatives; they glory in this, that they are given to no vice, none can charge them with any foul miscarriages, Luke xviii. 11. 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers.' This is not enough, you must advance a step further in solid piety; it is not enough that a field be not sown with tares or hemlock, but it must be sown with good seed. Consider two things:

1. If this be the best certificate you have to shew that you are not guilty of gross sin, God makes no account of you. A piece of brass, though it be not so bad as clay, yet not being so good as silver, it will not pass for current coin; so, tho' you are not grossly profane, yet not being of the right metal, wanting the stamp of holiness, you will never pass current in heaven.

2. A man may abstain from evil, yet he may go to hell for not doing good, Matth. iii. 10. 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Why were the foolish virgins shut out? they had done no hurt, they had not broke their lamps; yea, but their fault was, there was

no goodnefs in them, they had no oil in their lamps. Oh therefore let us not content ourfelves in being free from grofs acts of fin, but let us launch forth further in holinefs; let us cleanfe ourfelves from all pollution, perfecting holinefs.

*Secondly*, ‘ Deliver us from evil,’ that is, from temporal evil. We pray that God will either prevent temporal evils, or deliver us out of them.

1. We pray that God will prevent temporal evils; that he will be our fcreen to ftand between us and danger, Pfal. vii. 1. ‘ Save me from them that perfecute me.’ We may lawfully pray againft the plots of the wicked, that they prove abortive; that, though they have a defign upon us, they may not have their defire upon us, Pfal. cxli. 9. ‘ Keep me from the fnare which they have laid for me.’

2. We pray that God will deliver us out of temporal evils; that he will remove his judgments from us, whether famine, fword, peftilence, Pfal. xxxix. 10. ‘ Remove thy ftroke away from me.’ Yet with this

*Caution.* We may pray to be delivered from temporal evils, only fo far as God fees it good for us. We may pray to be delivered from the evil of fin abfolutely, but we muft pray to be delivered from temporal evils conditionally, fo far as God fees it fitting for us, and may ftand with his glory.

*Ufe.* In all the troubles that lie upon us, let us look up to God for eafe and fuccour; ‘ Deliver us from evil,’ Ifa. viii. 19. ‘ Should not a people feek unto their God?’ To blame then are the papifts, who knock at the wrong door; when they are in any trouble, they pray to the faints to deliver them; when they are in danger of fhipwreck, they pray to St. Nicholas; when they are in a fit of the fever, they pray to St. Petronelle; when they are in travail, they pray to St. Margaret. How unlawful it is to invoke faints in prayer, I will prove from one fcripture, Rom. x. 14. ‘ How then fhall they call on him, in whom they have have not believed?’ We may pray to none but fuch as we believe in; but we ought not to believe in any faint, therefore we may not pray to him. The papifts have, in their Lady’s Pfalter, directed their prayers for deliverance to the Virgin Mary; Deliver me, O Lady. *Benedicta Domina, in manibus tuis repofita eft noftra falus*; O thou bleffed Lady, in thy hands our falvation is laid up. But ‘ Abraham is ignorant of us,’ Ifa. lxiii. 16. The faints and Virgin Mary are ignorant of us.

To pray to faints, is idolatry advanced to blafphemy. Our Saviour hath taught us better, in all our diftreffes to pray to God for a cure, ‘ Deliver us from evil.’—He only knows what our troubles are, and can give us help from trouble; he only, that laid the burden on, can take it off. David went to God,

Pf. xxv. 17. ' O bring thou me out of my distresses.' God can, with a word, heal, Pf. cvii. 20. ' He sent forth his word, and healed them.' He delivered the three children out of the fiery furnace, Joseph out of prison, Daniel out of the lion's den : this proves him to be God, because none can deliver as he doth, Dan. iii. 29. ' There is no other that god can deliver after this fort.' Let us then, in all our straits and exigencies, seek to God, and say, ' Deliver us from evil.'



A FEW  
SELECT SERMONS,

PREACHED BY THE

REV. MR. THOMAS WATSON,

LATE MINISTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK.



OF WISDOM AND INNOCENCY.

MATTH. x. 16. *Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

THE apostle saith, 'all scripture is of divine inspiration,' 2 Tim. iii. 16. God's word is compared to a lamp, for its enlightening quality, Psal. cxix. 105. and to silver refined, for its enriching quality, Psal. xii. 6. Among other parts of sacred writ, this, in the text, is not the least; 'Be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves.' This is the speech of our blessed Saviour; his lips were a tree of life which fed many; his works were miracles; his words were oracles, and deserve to be engraven upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond.

This is a golden sentence; 'Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Our Lord Jesus, in this chapter, 1<sup>st</sup>, Gives his apostles their commission; 2<sup>dly</sup>, Foretels their danger; 3<sup>dly</sup>, Gives them several instructions.

I. Christ gives his apostles their commission. Before they went abroad to preach, Christ ordains them; ver. 5. 'These twelve Jesus sent forth.' Those who exercise in the ministerial function must have a lawful call, Heb. v. 4. 'No man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called of God.' Christ gave not only the apostles and prophets a call to their office, (who were extraordinary ministers) but even pastors and teachers, Eph iv. 11.

Qu. *But if one have gifts, is not this sufficient to the ministerial office?*

Ans. No: As grace is not sufficient to make a minister, so neither is gifts; therefore it is observable, that the scripture puts a difference between gifting and sending, Rom. x. 15. 'How shall they preach unless they be sent?' If gifts were

enough to constitute a minister, the apostle should have said, 'How shall they preach unless they be gifted?' But he saith, 'Unless they be sent:' which denotes a lawful call, or investiture into the office. The attorney that pleads at the bar, may have as good gifts as the judge that sits upon the bench; but he must have a lawful commission before he sit as a judge. If it be thus in matters civil, much more in church-matters, which are of higher concern. Those therefore, who usurp the work of the ministry without being solemnly set apart for it, discover more pride than zeal, and they can expect no blessing, Jer. xxiii. 32. 'I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people saith the Lord.' So much for the first, the apostles' commission they received; 'These twelve Jesus sent forth.'

II. Christ foretels their danger, ver. 16. 'Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' The apostles were going about a glorious work, but an hazardous work; they would meet with enemies fierce and savage, like wolves. As all that will live godly in Christ shall meet with sufferings; so commonly Christ's ambassadors encounter the deepest trials. Most of the apostles died by the hands of tyrants: Peter was crucified with his head downwards, Luke the evangelist was executed on an olive-tree, John was cast by Domitian into a vessel of scalding oil. Maximinus the emperor (as Eusebius relates) gave charge to his officers, to put none to death but the governors and pastors of the church. The ministers are Christ's *antefignani*, his ensign-bearers, to carry his colours, therefore they are most shot at: they hold forth his truth, Phil. i. 17. 'I am set for the defence of the gospel.' The Greek word, *Cheimai*, alludes to a soldier that is set in the forefront of the battle, and hath all the bullets flying about his ears. The minister's work is to part between men and their sins; and this causeth opposition. When Paul preached against Diana, all the city was in an uproar, Acts xix. This may stir up prayer for Christ's ministers, that they may be able to withstand the assaults of the enemy, 2 Thess. iii. 2.

III. Christ gives the apostles their instructions, whereof this in the text was one: 'Be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves.' (1.) The exhortation, 'Be ye wise.' (2.) The simile 'as serpents.' (3.) The qualification of this wisdom; a wisdom mixed with innocency, 'Harmless as doves.'

This union of the dove and the serpent is hard to find, Mat. xxiv. 45. 'Who then is a wise and faithful servant?' On which place, saith St. Chrysostom, it is an hard matter to find one faithful and wise. Faithful, there is the dove; wise, there is the serpent: it is hard to find both. If one would seek for a faithful man, questionless he may find many, if for a wise man,

he may find many; but if he seek for one both wise and faithful, this is *rara avis*, hard to find, yet it is possible, though not common. Moses, a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. there was the wisdom of the serpent; and the meekest man alive, Numbers xii. 3. 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men upon the face of the earth;' there was the innocency of the dove. Daniel was an excellent person, Dan. v. 14. 'Excellent wisdom is found in thee;' there was the prudence of the serpent; and Dan. vi. 4. 'The presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel, but they could find no occasion or fault;' behold here the innocency of the dove. Look on St. Paul, Acts xxiii. 6. 'When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out, I am a Pharisee;' by which speech Paul got all the Pharisees on his side; here was the wisdom of the serpent: and ver. 1. 'I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day:' here was the innocence of the dove. How amiable is this, the union of the dove and serpent? The scripture joins these two together, 'meekness and wisdom,' Jam. iii. 13. Wisdom, there is the serpent: meekness, there is the dove. This beautifies a Christian, when he hath the serpent's eye in the dove's head. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness; and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not circumvent us. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not betray the truth; and the wisdom of the serpent, that we may not betray ourselves. In short, religion without policy, is too weak to be safe: policy without religion, is too subtil to be good. When wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together, they presage the soul's happiness.

Doc. r. 3. *That Christians must be both wise and innocent.*

I begin with the first, wise: be ye 'wise as serpents.'

1. I shall speak concerning wisdom in general. Solomon saith, 'Wisdom is the principal thing,' Prov. iv. 7. 'It is better than riches,' Prov. iii. 14. 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.' If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom, a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. Job sets forth the encomium and praise of wisdom, Job xxviii. 13, 18. 'The price of wisdom is above rubies.' The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red fiery colour. It is reported of one of the kings of India, that he wore a ruby of that bigness and splen-

dour, that he might be seen by it in the dark ; but wisdom casts a more sparkling colour than the ruby, it makes us shine as angels. No chain of pearls you wear doth so adorn you as wisdom. Wisdom consists chiefly in three things : (1.) Knowledge to discern. (2.) Skill to judge. (3.) Activity to prosecute.

1. Knowledge to discern where happiness lies.

2. Skill to judge what will be the fittest means to conduce to it.

3. Activity to prosecute those things which will certainly accomplish that end. So much for wisdom in general.

More particularly : wisdom is variously distinguished. It is either natural, moral, or theological.

1. A natural wisdom ; which is seen in finding out the *arcana naturæ*, the secrets of nature. Aristotle was, by some of the ancients, called an eagle fallen from the clouds, because he was of such raised intellectuals, and had so profound an insight into the causes of things. This natural wisdom is adorning, but it is not sufficient to salvation. St. Hierom brings in Aristotle with his syllogisms, and Tully with his rhetoric, crying out in hell.

2. A moral wisdom ; which consists in two things *malum respuendo, bonum eligendo*. Moral wisdom lies in the rejection of those things which are prejudicial, and the election of those things which are beneficial ; this is called prudence. Knowledge without prudence may do hurt ; many a man's wit hath undone him, for want of wisdom.

3. A theological or sacred wisdom ; which is our knowing of God, who is the supreme and sovereign good. Greece was counted the eye of the world for wisdom ? and Athens the eye of Greece ; but neither of them knew God, Acts xvii. 23. ' I have found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God.' To know God, in whom is both *verum et bonum*, truth and goodness, is the master-piece of wisdom, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. ' And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.' And this knowledge of God is through Christ : Christ is the glass in which the face of God is seen, Col. i. 15. And then we know God aright, when we know him not only with a knowledge of speculation, but appropriation, Psal. xlviii. 14. ' This God is OUR God.' This knowledge of God is the most sublime wisdom : therefore it is called ' Wisdom from above,' Jam. iii. 17.

But to come nearer to the text, and speak of the wisdom of the serpent : ' Be ye wise as serpents.'

Qu. *But must we in every thing be like the serpent ?*

Ans. No ; our Saviour meant not that in every thing we should imitate the serpent. I shall shew you, (1.) Wherein we should not be like the serpent ; (2.) Wherein we should be like the serpent.



I. Wherein we should not be like the serpent.

1. The serpent eats dust, Isa. lxxv. 25. 'Dust shall be the serpent's meat.' It was a curse upon the serpent. Thus we should not be like the serpent, to feed immoderately upon earthly things. It is absurd for him that hath an heaven-born soul, capable of communion with God and angels, to eat greedily the serpent's meat : a Christian hath better food to feed on ; the heavenly manna, the precious promises, the body and blood of Christ. It is counted a miracle to find a diamond in a gold mine ; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ, the pearl of price, in an earthly heart. The lapwing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung ; to have a crown of profession on the head, yet feed inordinately on these dunghill-comforts, is unworthy of a Christian. What a poor contemptible thing is the world ? It cannot fill the heart ; If Satan should take a Christian up to the top of the pinnacle, and shew him all the kingdoms and glory of the world, what would he shew him, but a shew, a pleasant delusion ? There is a lawful use God allows of these outward things, but the sin is in the excess. The bee may suck a little honey from the leaf : but, put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned. The wicked are thus characterized, Eph. iii. 19. 'They mind earthly things.' They are like Saul, hid among the stuff. We should be as eagles, flying aloft towards heaven ; and not as serpents, creeping upon the earth, and licking the dust.

2. The serpent is deceitful. The serpent useth many shifts, and glides so cunningly, that we cannot trace him. This was one of those four things which wise Agur could not find out, 'the way of a serpent upon a rock,' Prov. xxx. 19. It is a deceitful creature ; we should not in this sense be like the serpent, for deceitfulness. Naturally we too much resemble the serpent for fraud and collusion, Jer. xvii. 9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things.' *1st*, Deceit towards man ; (1.) To dissemble friendship ; to cover malice with pretences of love ; to commend and censure, to flatter and hate ; a Judas' kiss, and a Joab's sword ; *mel in ore, fel in corde* (2.) To dissemble honesty ; to pretend just dealing, yet use false weights.

*2dly*, Deceit towards God ; to draw nigh to God with the lips, and the heart is far from him : to serve God, and seek ourselves ; to pretend to love God, and yet be in league with sin ; we should not in this sense be like the serpent, deceitful and given to shifts. O be upright ! be what you seem to be : God loves plainness of heart, Psal. li. 6. The plainer the diamond is, the more it sparkles ; the plainer the heart is, the more it sparkles in God's eye. What a commendation did Christ give Nathaniel ? John i. 47. 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.'

3. The serpent casts the coat, but another new coat comes in the room; in this we should not be like the serpent, to cast the coat, to cast off one sin, and another sin as bad to come in the room. The drunkard leaves his drunkenness, but it impairs his health, his credit, his purse, and falls to the sin of cozenage; the prodigal leaves his prodigality, and turns usurer; this is as if one disease should leave a man, and he should fall into another as bad; his ague leaves him, and he falls into a consumption. O be not like the serpent, that casts one coat and another comes; this is like him in the gospel, that had one devil go out of him, and seven worse spirits came in the room, Matt. xii. 45.

4. The serpent is a venomous creature, it is full of poison, Deut. xxxii. 24. In this be not like the serpent. It is said of wicked men, their poison is like the poison of a serpent, Ps. lviii. 4. What is this poison? It is the poison of malice; malice is the devil's picture. Lust makes men brutish, and malice makes them devilish. Malice carries in it its own punishment; a malicious man, to hurt another, will injure himself. Quintilian speaks of one who had a garden of flowers, and he poisoned his flowers, that his neighbour's bees sucking from them might be poisoned, and die. Oh be not venomous like the serpent! malice is mental murder; you may kill a man and never touch him, 1 John iii. 15. 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.' Malice spoils all your good duties; the malicious man defiles his prayer, poisons the sacramental cup; he eats and drinks his own damnation.' I have read of one who lived in malice, and being asked how he could say the Lord's prayer? He answered, I leave out those words, 'As we forgive them that trespass against us.' But St. Austin brings in God replying thus to him: "Because thou dost not say my prayer, therefore I will not hear thine." The malicious man is not like to enjoy either earth or heaven: not the earth, for the 'meek shall inherit the earth,' Mat. v. 4. Nor is he like to enjoy heaven, for God 'will beautify the meek with salvation,' Ps. cxlix. 4. so that the malicious man is cut off both from earth and heaven.

5. The serpent is given to hissing: so it is said of the basilisk. In this be not like the serpent, to hiss out reproaches and invectives against the saints and people of God: they are the seed of the serpent that hiss at godliness. The Lord will one day reckon with men for all their hard speeches, Jude 15. Lucian was such an one who did hiss out and scoff against religion; and as a just judgment of God, he was torn in pieces by dogs.

6. The serpent stoppeth her ear: it is an obstinate deafness, Ps. lviii. 4. 'They are as the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ear.' In this be not like the serpent, obstinately to stop your ears to the voice of God's word. While God calls you to re-

pent of sin, be not as the basilisk, to stop your ear, Zech. vii. 11. 'They refused to hear; and stopped their ears, that they might not hear.' The word denounceth threatenings against sin; but many, instead of being like the Publican, smiting on their breast, they are deaf as adders, stopping their ears. If you shut your ear against God's word, take heed God doth not shut heaven against you: if God cries to you to repent, and you will not hear; when you cry for mercy, God will not hear, Zech. vii. 13. 'As he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts.'

7. The serpent casts her coat, but keeps her sting: in this sense be not like the serpent, to cast off the outward acts of sin, and keep the love of sin: he whose heart is in love with any sin, is an hypocrite. (1.) A man may forbear sin, yet retain the love of it: he may forbear the act of gross sin, *formidine pœnae*, for fear of hell; as a man may forbear a dish he loves, for fear it should bring his disease upon him, the stone or gout. (2.) A man may forsake sin, yet keep the love of sin; he may forsake sin either out of policy or necessity: 1<sup>st</sup>, Policy; vice will impair his health, eclipse his credit; therefore out of policy he will forsake it: or 2<sup>dly</sup>, Necessity; perhaps he can follow the trade of sin no longer; the adulterer is grown old, the prodigal poor; either the purse fails, or the strength. Thus a man may refrain the act of sin, yet retain the love of sin; this is like the serpent, which casts her coat, but keeps her sting. O take heed of this! herein be not like the serpent; remember that saying of Hierom, *gravius est peccatum diligere quam perpetrare*; it is worse to love sin than to commit it: a man may commit sin through a temptation, or out of ignorance; and when he knows it to be a sin, he is sorry for it; but he that loves sin, his will is in the sin, and that aggravates it, and is like the dye, which makes the wool of a crimson colour.

8. Serpents are chased away with sweet perfumes; the perfume of harts-horn, or the sweet odour of the Styrax will drive the serpent away. In this be not like the serpent, to be driven away with the sweet perfumes of holiness. Carnal hearts are for things only which delight the senses: they will discourse of news of traffic, here they are in their element; but let a man bring with him the sweet perfume of religious discourse, let him talk of Christ, or living by faith, this spiritual perfume drives them away: oh, be not in this like the serpent! how do you think to live with the saints in heaven, that cannot endure their company here? You hate the sweet favour of their ointments, the fragrant perfume of their graces.

9. The serpent (as is noted of the Stellio, a kind of serpent) doth no sooner cast his skin, but he eats it up again: in this be not like the serpent to forsake sin, and then take it up again,

2 Pet. ii. 22. It is happened according to the proverb, 'The dog is returned to his own vomit again.' Such were Demas and Julian. Many after a divorce espouse their sins again; as if one's ague should leave him a while, and then come again: the devil seemed to be cast out, but comes the second time, and the 'end of that man is worse than his beginning,' Luke xi. 24. because his sin is greater, he sins knowingly and wilfully, and his damnation will be greater.

10. Serpents are great lovers of wine. Pliny, who writes the natural history, saith "If serpents come where wine is, they drink insatiably." In this be not like the serpent; though the scripture allows the use of wine, 1 Tim. v. 23. yet it forbids the excess, Eph. v. 18. 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.' Be not like the serpent in this 'lovers of wine.' Because this sin of drunkenness doth so abound in this age, I shall enlarge something more on this head. It is said of the old world, 'They ate, they drank, till the flood came,' Luke xvii. 27. Drinking is not a sin, but the meaning is, they drank to intemperance; they disordered themselves with drink; and God let them have liquor enough, first they were drowned in wine, and then in water.

There is no sin which doth more deface God's image than drunkenness, it disguiseth a person, and doth even unman him: drunkenness makes him have the throat of a fish, the belly of a swine, and the head of an ass; drunkenness is the shame of nature, the extinguisher of reason, the shipwreck of chastity, and the murder of conscience; drunkenness is hurtful for the body, the cup kills more than the cannon; it causeth dropsies, catarrhs, apoplexies; drunkenness fills the eyes with fire, and the legs with water, and turns the body into an hospital; but the greatest hurt is that it doth to the soul; excess of wine breeds the worm of conscience. The drunkard is seldom reclaimed by repentance, and the ground of it is partly, because, by this sin, the senses are so enchanted, reason so impaired, and lust so inflamed; and, partly, it is judicial, the drunkard being so befuddled with this sin, God saith of him as of Ephraim, Hosea iv. 17. 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone;' so, this man is joined to his cups, 'let him alone,' let him drown himself in liquor, till he scorch himself in fire. How many woes hath God pronounced against this sin, Isa. xxviii. 1. 'Wo to the drunkards of Ephraim!' Joel i. 5. 'Howl, ye drinkers of wine!' drunkenness excludes a person from heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 10. 'Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God:' a man cannot go to heaven reeling. King Solomon makes an oration full of invectives against this sin, Prov. xxiii. 29. 'Who hath wo? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine. Who hath conten-

tions ?' Drink, when abused, breeds quarrels, it causeth duels. ' Who hath babbling ?' When one is in drink, his tongue runs, he will reveal any secrets of his friend. ' Who hath redness of eyes ?' Redness of eyes comes sometimes from weeping, but too often from drinking ; and what is the issue ? ver. 32. ' At last, the wine bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.' The wine smiles in the glass, but stings in the conscience. Drunkenness is a sin against all the ten commandments. (1.) Drunkenness casts off the true God, Hos. iv. 11. ' Wine takes away the heart :' It takes the heart off from God, (2.) It makes the belly a god, Phil. iii. 19. To this the drunkard pours drink offerings ; there is a breach of the second commandment. (3.) The drunkard in his cups takes God's name in vain by his oaths. (4.) The drunkard makes no difference of days ; he is seldom sober on a sabbath ; he on that day worships Bacchus. (5.) The drunkard honours neither his natural father, nor the magistrate his civil father ; he will be intemperate tho' the laws of the land forbid it. (6.) The drunkard commits murder. Alexander killed his friend Clytus when he was drunk, for whom he would have given half his kingdom when he was sober. (7.) The drunkard's wine proves lust. Austin calls wine *fomentum libidinis*, the inflamer of lust. *Nunquam ego ebrum castum putavi* ; I never did believe a drunken man to be chaste, saith Hierom. (8.) The drunkard is a thief ; he spends that money upon his drunken lust, which should have been given to charitable uses ; so he robs the poor. (9.) The drunkard is a slanderer ; he cares not when he is on the ale-bench, how he doth defame and belie others ; when he hath taken his full cups, he is now fit to take a false oath. (10.) The drunkard sins against the tenth commandment ; for he covets to get another's estate, by circumvention and extortion, that he may be the better able to follow his drunken trade. Thus he sins against the ten commandments.

If this sin of drunkenness be not reformed, I pray God, the sword be not made drunk with blood. And whereas some will go to shift off this sin from themselves, that they are no drunkards, because they have not drunk away their reason and senses ; they are not so far gone in drink that they cannot go : he is a drunkard in the scripture sense, who is mighty to drink wine, Isa. v. 22. ' He is a drunkard (saith Solomon) that tarries long at the wine,' Prov. xxiii. 30. He who sits at it from morning to night, that drinks away his precious time, though he doth not drink away his reason, he is a drunkard that drinks more than doth him good, and that, though he be not himself drunk, yet he makes another drunk, Hab. ii. 15 ' Wo to him that gives his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunk.' Oh ! I beseech you, be not in this like the serpent,

lovers of wine. This I fear is one cause why the word preached doth so little good on many in this city, they drink away sermons; they do as the hunted deer when it is wounded, runs to the water and drinks; so, when they have been at a sermon, and the arrow of reproof hath wounded their conscience, they run presently, and drink away those convictions; they steep the sermon in wine. The tavern-bell doth more hurt, than the sermon-bell doth good. Thus you have seen wherein we should not be like serpents.

II. Wherein we should be like the serpent, and that is, in prudence and wisdom; 'be ye wise as serpents.' The serpent is a most prudent creature, therefore the devil made use of the serpent to deceive our first parents, because it was such a subtil creature, Gen. iii. 1. 'The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field.' There is a natural wisdom and subtilty in every part of the serpent, and we should labour to imitate them, and be 'wise as serpents.'

*First*, The serpent hath a subtilty in his eye, he hath a singular sharpness of sight; therefore, among the Grecians, a serpent's eye was a proverbial speech for one of a quick understanding; in this we should be like the serpent. Get the serpent's eye, have a quick insight into the mysteries of the Christian religion. Knowledge is the beauty and ornament of a Christian, Prov. xiv. 18. 'The prudent are crowned with knowledge.' Get the serpent's eye, 'be divinely illuminated.' Faith, without knowledge, is presumption; zeal, without knowledge, is passion, Prov. xix. 2. 'Without knowledge the mind is not good:' for one to say he hath a good heart, who hath no knowledge, is as if one should say he hath a good eye, when he hath no sight. In this be like the serpent, of a quick understanding.

*Secondly*, The serpent hath a prudence and subtilty in his ear; the serpent will not be deluded with the voice of the charmer, but 'stops its ear:' In this we must be 'wise as serpents,' stop your ears to false teachers, who are the devil's charmers. (1.) We must stop our ears to Arminian teachers, who place the chief power in the will, as if that were the helm that turns about the soul in conversion, 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Who maketh thee to differ from another?' *Ego meipsum discerno*, said Grevinchovious, I have made myself to differ. Be as the serpent, stop your ears to such doctrine. (2.) We must stop our ears to Socinian teachers, who raze the foundation of all religion, and deny Christ's divinity. This the apostle calls 'a damnable heresy,' 2 Pet. ii. (3.) We must stop our ears to popish teachers, who teach merit, indulgencies, transubstantiation; who teach that the pope is the head of the church. Christ is called the head of the church, Eph. v. 23. For the pope to be head, is, to make the church monstrous, to have two heads: Popish teachers teach the people nonsense and blasphemy; they

cause the people to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, to believe without sense : It is a damnable religion ; therefore worshipping the beast, and drinking the cup of God's indignation are put together, Rev. xiv. 9. Oh ! in this be ' wise as serpents ; ' stop your ears to the charming of false teachers. God hath given his people this wisdom, to stop their ears to heretics, John x. 3. ' A stranger will they not follow, but flee from him. '

*Thirdly*, The serpent hath a chief care to defend his head ; a blow there is deadly : so in this we should ' be wise as serpents ; ' our chief care should be to defend our head from error. The plague in the head is worst. Loose principles breed loose practices. If the head be tainted with erroneous opinions, that believers are free *a lege morali* ; that there is no resurrection ; that we may do evil that good may come of it ; what sin will not this lead to ? Oh keep your head : Error is a spiritual gangrene, 2 Tim. ii. 17. which spreads, and, if not presently cured, is mortal. Heresies destroy the doctrine of faith, they rend the mantle of the church's peace, and eat out the heart of religion. The Gnostics, as Epiphanius observes, did not only pervert the judgment of their proselytes, but brought them at last to corporeal uncleanness ; error damns as well as vice. Vice is like killing with a pistol, and error killing with poison. O be wise as serpents, defend your head. ' Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. '

Our Saviour Christ here commends to us the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocency of the dove. The elect are called wise virgins, Matth. xxv. 4. Virgins, there is the dove, wise, there is the serpent. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness ; and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others ; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not circumvent us.

*Doct.* Christians must be both wise and innocent. This union of the dove and the serpent is hard to find, but it is possible ; Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. there was the prudence of the serpent ; and he was ' meek above all the men upon the face of the earth, ' Numb. xii. 3. there was the innocency of the dove. But the most famous instance of wisdom and innocency was in our Saviour : when the Jews came to him with an ensnaring question, Mark xii. 14. ' Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not ? ' Christ answers wisely, ver. 17. ' Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's : ' deny not Cæsar his civil right, nor God his religious worship ; let your loyalty be mixed with piety : here he shewed the wisdom of the ser-

pent. And would you see Christ's innocency? 1 Pet. ii. 22. 'There was no guile found in his mouth;' who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: He opened his mouth in praying for his enemies, but not in reviling them: behold here the innocency of the dove.

Two things I am to speak of; the serpent, and the dove.

I. The Serpent.

Qu. *Wherein should we be like the serpent?*

Ans. In prudence and sagacity; 'Be ye wise as serpents.' The serpent is the most prudent creature; therefore the devil made use of the serpent to deceive our first parents, Gen. ii. 1. 'The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field.' There was a natural wisdom and subtilty in every part of the serpent: and herein we should endeavour to imitate him; 'Be wise as serpents.'

1. The serpent hath a subtilty in his eye: he hath a singular sharpness of sight: therefore among the Grecians, a serpent's eye was a proverbial speech for one of a quick understanding. In this we should be like the serpent, have a quick insight into the mysteries of the gospel. Get the serpent's eye, Prov. x. 14. 'Wise men lay up knowledge.' Faith without knowledge is presumption, zeal without knowledge is frenzy.

2. The serpent hath a prudence and subtilty in his ear: the serpent will not be deluded with the voice of the charmer, but stops its ears: in this 'be wise as serpents;' stop your ears from such as would discourage you from strict holy walking. Some inspired by Satan, would raise prejudices against the ways of God, that they are strewed with thorns of mortification and persecution: if you will be religious, you must hang your harps upon the willows, and bid adieu to all joy, Acts xxviii. 22. 'This sect is every where spoken against:' Oh, 'be wise as serpents!' Stop your ears to such as would discourage you from holy walking; they are the devil's charmers. Godliness is the root on which all true joy grows; solid joy, though not wanton, Psal. cxxxviii. 5. 'Yea they will sing in the ways of the Lord.' Acts ix. 31. If we leave God, whither shall we go? When Saul left God, he went to the witch of Endor, 1 Sam. xxviii. 8.

3. The serpent hath a subtilty in its wings: for naturalists report, such serpents are found in Ethiopia, as have wings; and the scripture mentions a fiery flying serpent, Isa. xiv. 29. which wings denote the subtilty of the serpent in the hasty prosecution of his prey: in this be like the serpent, in having winged desires after heavenly objects. Desire is the wing of the soul, which sets it a flying: haste after ordinances, they are *pabulum animae*, the food of the soul; fly to them with appetite. Get the serpent's wing, Psal. cxxii. 1. 'Come let us go up to the house of the Lord.' We know not how long we shall enjoy



the blessings of the sanctuary : when manna was to cease on the seventh day, the people of Israel gathered twice as much on the sixth. If we have the wisdom from above, we shall neglect no season wherein we may get the bread of life broken to us.

4. Serpents have a subtilty and prudence in their drinking ; before they drink, *expunt venenum*, they cast up their poison. In this we should be ‘ wise as serpents ;’ before we come to ordinances, we should cast up the poison of sin by repentance. If a man takes opium or mercury, a cordial will do him no good : So, as long as men feed on their sins, ordinances will do them no good ; nay, much hurt : they eat and drink their own damnation. In this therefore let us ‘ be wise as serpents ;’ cast up the poison of sin, before we come to drink of the waters of the sanctuary.

6. The serpent hath a subtilty in his whole body, which he wraps together like a circle to defend his head ; a blow on the head is deadly, and his chief policy is to safe-guard his head : in this let us learn of the serpent our chief care should be to defend our head from error ; the apostle calls them damnable heresies, 2 Peter ii. 1. they destroy the doctrine of faith, rend the coat of the church’s peace, and eat out the heart of religion. Let us, as the serpent, defend our head ; let us keep our head from Socinian opinions, who deny the Deity of Christ ; from popish opinions, merit, image-worship, transubstantiation : papists cause the people to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, to believe against sense. Have a care to defend your head from being tainted with popish aphorisms. Thus you see wherein we should be like the serpent, in prudence and sagacity.

II. The second thing I am to speak of is the dove ; ‘ be harmless as doves.’ The dove is an excellent creature ; it was so acceptable, that in the old law, God would have the dove offered in sacrifice : the Holy Ghost, when he would appear in a visible shape, assumed the likeness of a dove, Mat. iii. 16. We should be as doves in three respects ; I. In respect of meekness ; II. In respect of innocency ; III. In respect of purity.

I. In respect of meekness. The dove is the emblem of meekness ; it is *sine felle*, without gall : we should be as doves for meekness ; we must avoid unruly passion, which is *brevis injuria*, a short frenzy ; we must be without the gall of bitterness and revenge ; we must be of mild spirits, praying for our enemies : So Stephen, Acts vii. 60. ‘ Lord, Lay not this sin to their charge.’ This dove-like meekness is the best jewel and ornament we can wear, 1 Pet. iii. 4. ‘ The ornament of a meek spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.’ Passion doth disguise, meekness adorns.

II. We should be as doves for innocency.

The innocency of the dove is seen in two things. (1.) Not to deceive. (2.) Not to hurt.

1. Not to deceive. The dove is, without gall, so without guile; it doth not deceive or lie at the catch: thus we should be as the dove, without fraud and craft. There is a holy simplicity commendable, Rom. xvi. 19. 'I would have you simple concerning evil;' to be a bungler at sin, not to have the art to beguile, this is a good simplicity: as Nathaniel, 'in whose spirit there is no guile,' John i. 42. Where almost is this dove-like innocence to be found? We live in an age, wherein there are more foxes than doves: persons are full of guile, they study nothing but fallacies, that one knows not how to deal with them, Psal. xxi. 2. 'With a double heart do they speak.'

2. Not to hurt. The dove *rostra non laedis*, the dove hath no horns or talons to hurt, only wings to defend itself by flight: other creatures are commonly well armed; the lion hath its paw, the boar its tusk; the stag its horns; but the dove is a most harmless creature, it hath nothing wherewith to offend: Thus we should be as doves for harmlessness; we should not do wrong to others, but rather suffer wrong. Such a dove was Samuel, 1 Sam. xii. 3. 'Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?' He did not get mens' estates into his hands, or raise himself upon the ruins of others. How rare is it to find such doves? Sure they are flown away. 'How many birds of prey are there?' Micah vii. 2. 'They all lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with a net;' these are not doves, but vultures; 'they travail with mischief, and are in pain till they bring forth.'

III. We should be as doves for purity. The dove is the emblem of purity; it loves the purest air, it feeds on pure grain; the raven feeds on the carcase, but the dove feeds pure. Thus let us be as doves for sanctity, 'Cleansing ourselves from all pollution both of flesh and spirit,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. Christ's dove is pure, Cant. v. 2. 'My dove, my undefiled.' Let us keep pure among dregs, 1 Tim. v. 22. 'Keep thyself pure.' Better have a rent in the flesh, than an hell in the conscience: the dove is a chaste, pure creature; let us be doves for purity.

Use 1. See here the nature of a good Christian; he is wise and innocent: he hath so much of the serpent, that he doth not forfeit his discretion; and so much of the dove, that he doth not defile his conscience. A godly man is looked upon by a carnal eye, as weak and indiscreet, as having something of the dove, but nothing of the serpent: to believe things not seen, to choose sufferings rather than sin, this is counted folly; but the world is mistaken in a believer, he hath his eyes in his head; he knows what he doth; he is prudent, as well as holy; he is wise that finds the pearl of price; he is wise that provides for eter-

nity ; he is the wisest man that hath wit to save his soul : he is wise that makes him his friend who shall be his judge. The godly man acts both the politician and the divine ; he retains his ingenuity, yet he doth not part with his integrity.

*Use 2. Reproof.* It reproves them who have too much of the serpent, but nothing of the dove, Jer. iv. 22. ‘ Wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge ;’ These are like the devil, who retains his subtilty, but not his innocency. We have many in this age like the serpent for craftiness, Dan. viii. 25. ‘ Through policy he shall cause craft to prosper.’ Men have the head-piece of subtilty, but want the breast-plate of honesty ; they are wise to contrive sin, to forge plots, to study compliance, rather than conscience ; the port they aim at is preferment ; the compass they sail by is policy ; the pilot that steers them is Satan. These have the craftiness of the serpent, ‘ They are wise to do evil.’

2. They are like the serpent for mischief. You know the fiery serpents did sting Israel ; these have the sting of the serpent ; they have a sting in their tongues, stinging the people of God with bitter slanders and invectives, calling them factious and seditious ; and they sting with their indictments and excommunications, Gal. iv. 29. Such stinging serpents were Nero, Dioclesian, and Julian ; and their spirit is yet alive in the world. These have too much of the serpent in them, but nothing of the dove, 2 Pet. ii. 3. ‘ Their damnation slumbereth not.’

*Use 3. Exhortation.* To put in practice our Saviour’s counsel in the text, join the serpent and the dove together, wisdom and holiness : Here lies the knot : this is the great difficulty, to unite these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency ; if you separate these two, you spoil all.

*Qu. Wherein doth a Christian join these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness ?*

*Ans.* This I shall answer in twelve particulars.

1. To be wise and innocent consists in this, to be sensible of an injury, yet not revenge it. A Christian is not a stoic, nor yet a fury : he is so wise, that he knows when an injury is done him ; but so holy, that he knows how to pass it by ; this is a most excellent temper of soul ; I had almost said angelical. As the wind doth allay the heat of the air, so grace doth allay the heat of revenge. Moses herein shewed a mixture of the serpent and the dove : Miriam murmured against him, Numb. xii. 2. ‘ Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses ?’ Is he the only prophet to declare God’s mind to us ? Moses was so wise, as to discern her pride, and slighting of him ; yet so meek as to bury the injury : When God struck her with leprosy, he prays for her, Numb. xii. 13. ‘ Heal her now, O God, I beseech

thee.' And upon his prayer, she was cured of her leprosy. A good Christian hath so much wisdom as to discern his enemy's malice, but so much grace as to conquer his own : He knows it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression, Prov. xix. 11. Though a Christian hath so much prudence as to vindicate himself, yet so much goodness as not to avenge himself. Behold here the serpent and the dove united, sagacity and innocency.

2. The mixing wisdom and innocency is seen in this, to be humble, but not base. Humility is part of the dove's innocency, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'Be ye clothed with humility.' St. Paul, though the chief of the apostles, calls himself 'the least of saints.'

A gracious soul hath low thoughts of himself, and carries himself lowly towards others ; but, though he be humble, he is not base ; though he will not saucily resist his superiors, he will not sinfully humour them : though he will not do such proud actions, as to make his enemies hate him, yet he will not do such sordid actions as to make them despise him ; here is the serpent and the dove united.

A good Christian is so humble as to oblige others, but not so unworthy as to disobey God. St. Paul, as far as he could with a good conscience, did 'become all things to all, that he might gain some,' 1 Cor. ix. 20, 22. But he would not break a commandment to gratify any. 'When God's glory lay at stake, who more resolute than Paul ?' Gal. ii. 5. The three children were humble, they gave the king his title of honour ; but they were not sordidly timorous, Dan. iii. 18. 'Be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods.' Though they shewed reverence to the king's person, yet no reverence to the image he had set up. A good Christian will not do any thing below himself : though he is for obeying of laws, yet he will not prostitute himself to mens' lusts. He is humble, there he shews the innocency of the dove : but not base, there he shews the wisdom of the serpent.

3. The prudence of the serpent, and innocency of the dove, is seen in this, to 'reprove the sin,' yet 'love the person.' We are commanded to reprove, Lev. xix. 17. 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart ; thou shalt rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.' Not to reprove sin, is to approve it ; but this sword of reproof is a dangerous weapon, if it be not well handled : to reprove, and yet love, is to act both the serpent and the dove.

*Qu. How may a Christian so reprove sin, as to shew love to the person ?*

*Ans.* 1. In taking a fit season to reprove another ; that is, when his anger is over ; as, when God did rebuke Adam, he came to him 'in the cool of the day,' Gen. iii. 8. So, when we are

to reprove any, we are to come to them when their spirits are more cool, and fit to receive a reproof. To reprove a man when he is in a passion, is to give strong water in a fever ; it doth more hurt than good. By observing a fit season, we shew both prudence and holiness ; we discover as well discretion as affection.

2. Reproving sin, so as to shew love to the person, is seen in this, when, though we tell him plainly of his sin, yet it is in mild, not provoking words, 2 Tim. ii. 25. ‘ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.’ Peter tells the Jews plainly of their sin in crucifying Christ, but useth suaves and gospel lenitives, to allure and encourage them to believe, Acts ii. 23. ‘ Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified ;’ ver. 38. ‘ Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin : for the promise is to you, and to your children.’ Reproof is a bitter pill, and hard to swallow, therefore we must dip it in sugar ; use those sweet mollifying expressions, that others may see love coming along with the reproof. David compares reproof to oil, Ps. cxli. 5. Oil supplies the joints when they are hard and stiff ; our reproofs being mixed with the oil of compassion, they work most kindly, and do most soften stiff obdurate hearts.

3. Reproving sin, yet to love the person, is when the end of our reproof is not to revile him, but to reclaim him. While we go to heal mens’ consciences, we must take heed of wounding their names. The surgeon, in opening a vein, shews both skill and love ; skill in not cutting an artery ; and love, in letting out the bad blood ; here is the mixing the serpent and the dove ; the wisdom of the serpent is seen, in not reproaching the sinner ; the innocency of the dove is seen in reclaiming him from sin.

4. Prudence and holiness is seen in this, to “ know what we should do, and do what we know.” To know what we should do, there is the wisdom of the serpent ; to do what we know, there is the innocency of the dove, John xiii. 17. Knowledge is a jewel adorns him that wears it ; it is the enriching and bespangling of the mind ; knowledge is the eye of the soul, to guide it in the right way : but this knowledge must be joined with holy practice : to separate practice from knowledge, ‘ is to separate the dove from the serpent.’ Many illuminated heads can discourse fluently in matters of religion, but they do not live up to their knowledge, this is to have good eyes, but to have the feet cut off ; they know they should not break the sabbath, they should not defame nor defraud : but they do not practise what they know ; here they separate the dove from the serpent, virtue from knowledge. How vain is knowledge without practice ! as if one should know a sovereign medicine

and not apply it. Satan is a knowing spirit, he hath enough of the serpent ; but that which makes him a devil is, he wants the dove, he doth not practise holiness.

5. To mix the serpent and dove, is to keep two trades going. To understand worldly affairs, there is the wisdom of the serpent ; yet not neglect the soul, there is the innocency of the dove. God hath said, ‘ Six days shalt thou labour,’ Exod. xx. 9. Religion did never grant a patent to idleness ; there is a lawful care to be had about secular things ; to have insight into one’s calling is a commendable wisdom, but with this wisdom join the dove’s innocency : so follow your calling, as not to neglect your soul. The soul is a precious thing, it would beggar the angels to give half the price of a soul. Our greatest care should be to get grace. While you put gold in your bag, do not forget to put oil in your vessel. Trade beyond the East Indies : drive a trade of holiness. ‘ This merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver,’ Prov. iii. 14. Live in a calling, but especially live by faith ; look to the providing for your families, but especially to the saving of your souls. The soul is the angelical part, the loss of this can never be made up again. God (saith Chrysostom) hath given a man two eyes ; if he lose one, he hath another ; but he hath but one soul : if he lose that, it is irrecoverable, it can never be made up again. O unite the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness ; use the world, but love your soul ; trade on earth, but beware of breaking in your trade for heaven. How many part these two, the serpent and the dove ? They are wise for the world, but fools for their souls. It is too often seen, that men pull down their souls to build up an estate.

6. To join the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency, consists in this, to know how to give counsel, and how to keep counsel. He hath the wisdom of the serpent, that can give counsel : he knows how to advise another in difficult cases, and speak a word in due season, 2 Sam. xvi. 13. ‘ The counsel of Ahitophel was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God.’ But this is not enough, to have the wisdom of the serpent in being able to give counsel, but there must be the innocency of the dove too, in keeping counsel. If a friend’s secret be imparted to us (unless in case of blood) we are not to reveal it. A friend is *alter idem*, as one’s own soul, Deut. xiii. 6. and what he imparts of his heart, should be kept under lock and key, Prov. xxv. 9. ‘ Discover not a secret unto another, lest he that hear thee put thee to shame,’ &c. To disclose a friend’s secrets, though it be not treason, it is treachery, it is most unchristian ; a word may be spoken in secret, which, when it is trumpeted out, may occasion quarrels or law-suits. He that cannot keep a matter committed to him, is like a vessel that

runs out, or a sick stomach that cannot keep the meat, but brings it up again. He that publisheth his friend's secret doth publish his own shame.

7. To mix these two, prudence and holiness, is to know the seasons of grace, and improve them; to know the seasons of grace, there is the wisdom of the serpent. It is wisdom in the husbandman to know the fit time for pruning of trees, sowing of seed: so it is no less wisdom to know the golden seasons of grace: while we hear the joyful sound, while we have praying hours, while the Spirit of God blows on our hearts, here is a gale for heaven. The day of grace will not always last; the shadows of the evening seem to be stretched out; things look as if the gospel tended apace to a sun setting: be wise as serpents, to know what a prize is put in your hands. And with the serpent join the dove, that is, in improving the seasons of grace. The stork and turtle not only know their season but improve it; they approach to the warmer climate against the spring, saith Pliny. Here is the serpent and dove united, knowing and improving the day of grace; when we profit by ordinances, when we mix the word with faith, when an ordinance hath stamped holiness upon us, as the seal leaves its print upon the wax; this is to improve the seasons of grace.

8. The serpent and the dove, wisdom and innocency is to be moderate, yet zealous. Moderation is good in some cases, Phil. iv. 5. 'Let your moderation be known to all.'

*First*, Moderation is good in case of anger. When the passions are up, moderation sits as queen and governess in the soul; it allays the heat of passion. Moderation is *fraenum irae*, the bridle of anger.

*Secondly*, Moderation is good in case of law-suits; so the Greek word for moderation, is properly taken. If there be a dispute in law between us and others, we are not to take the extremity of the law, but use Christian equity and mildness; nay, for peace's sake, *cedere de jure*, rather part with some of our right, than oppress them: this much honours the gospel.

*Thirdly*, Moderation is good in things indifferent. Things ought not to be rigorously imposed in God's worship, which are not of divine injunction: God never made governors of the church to be like pilots of a ship, to steer men's consciences which way they please. Moderation and Christian forbearance, in things indifferent, would much tend to the peace and unity of the church. All this moderation is commendable, and shews the wisdom of the serpent: but remember to join the dove with the serpent; we must so exercise moderation, as withal to cherish zeal. St. Paul in some things was moderate, he did not press circumcision, Acts xv. 25. He was tender of laying a yoke upon the consciences of the disciples; but he had zeal with

his moderation, when he saw their idolatry at Athens, the fire of his zeal broke forth, Acts xvii. 16. 'His spirit was stirred in him.' It was good advice Calvin gave to Melancthon, that he should not so affect the name of moderation, as to lose all his zeal. To be cool and silent when God's blessed truths are undermined or adulterated is not moderation, but lukewarmness, which is to God a most hateful temper, Rev. iii. 15. 'I would you were cold or hot;' and any thing but lukewarm. This is to shew prudence and holiness, when we are moderate, yet zealous.

9. To unite serpent and dove, consists in this, when we defend the truth by argument, and adorn it by life: defending the truth is the serpent's wisdom: an intelligent Christian can convince gainfayers. This wisdom of the serpent was eminently in Stephen, Acts vi. 9. 'There arose certain of the synagogue, disputing with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake.' We read in the acts and monuments of the church, John Fryth, martyr, being opposed by three papists, he, like another Hercules, fighting with all the three at once, did, by his wisdom, so convince them, that one of them turned from popery, and became a zealous protestant. Herein is the wisdom of the serpent, not only to love them that profess the truth, but to silence them that oppose it. But with this wisdom of the serpent, there must be joined the innocency of the dove; together with defending the truth by argument, there must be adorning it by life, Tit. ii. 10. 'That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.' There are some who can dispute for the truth, but disgrace it by their bad living; this is to act both the serpent and the dove, when we not only plead for the truth; but walk in the truth; like Nazianzen, of whom it was said, he did thunder in his doctrine, and lighten in his conversation.

10. The uniting the serpent and the dove, is to be serious in religion, yet cheerful. Seriousness puts the heart in an holy frame, it fixeth it on God. Seriousness is to the soul, as ballast to the ship, it keeps the soul from being overturned with vanity; the heart is ever best when it is serious. But this seriousness in religion must be mixed with cheerfulness: cheerfulness conduceth to health, Prov. xvii. 22. It honours religion, it proclaims to the world we serve a good master; cheerfulness is a friend to grace, it puts the heart in tune to praise God, Psal. lxxi. 21. Uncheerful Christians, like the spies, bring an evil report on the good land: others suspect there is something unpleasant in religion, that they who profess it hang their harps upon the willows, and walk so dejectedly. Be serious, yet cheerful, Phil. iv. 4. 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' Why was Christ anointed, but to give the oil of joy for mourning?



Isa. xvi. 1. Joy is as well a fruit of the Spirit as faith, Gal. v. 22. One way of grieving the Spirit (saith Heinsius) is by Christians' uncheerful walking: If you would render the gospel lovely, mix the dove and the serpent; be serious, yet cheerful in God.

11. The uniting of the serpent and the dove, wisdom and holiness, consists in this, when we so lay up as we lay out. It is a duty to provide for our charge, 1 Tim. v. 8. 'If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel.' To lay up for our family, here is the wisdom of the serpent, but we must lay out for the poor too, here is the mixture of the dove, 1 Tim. vi. 17. 'Charge them that are rich in the world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works.' The poor man is as it were an altar, if we bring our alms and lay upon it, with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Faith, though it hath sometimes a trembling hand, it must not have a withered hand, but must stretch forth itself to works of mercy; there's nothing lost by charitableness, Prov. xi. 25. 'The liberal soul shall be made fat,' Psal. xli. 1. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' While men do so remember their family, that they do not forget the poor, they shew both prudence and piety; they unite the serpent and the dove.

12. The serpent's wisdom and the dove's innocency is seen in this, so to avoid danger, as not to commit sin; to preserve our liberty, yet keep our integrity. There is a sinful escaping danger, namely, when we are called to suffer for the truth, and we decline it, but there is an escaping danger without sin; as thus, when we do not betray ourselves into the enemies hands by rashness, nor yet betray the truth by cowardice, we have a pattern of this in our Saviour; he avoided his enemies in one place, that he might preach the gospel in another, Luke iv. 30. 'They brought him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong: but he passing through the midst of them, went his way:' there was Christ's wisdom in not betraying himself to his enemy: and ver. 43. 'I must preach to other cities also;' there was his holiness. Christ's securing of himself, was in order to the preaching of the gospel. This is to mix prudence and innocency, when we so avoid danger, as we do not commit sin.

Thus I have, as briefly and as clearly as I could, shewn you how we must unite these two, the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness: for want of coupling these two together religion doth much suffer in the Christian world. "What Christ hath joined together let no man put asunder." Observe these two, prudence and holiness; here is the serpent's eye in the dove's head. When these two, wisdom and innocency

(like Castor and Pollux) appear together, they preface much good and happiness that will befall a Christian.



## WHO ARE IN CHRIST, ARE NEW CREATURES.

1 COR. v. 17. *Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*

In this scripture consists the essence, and soul of religion. I note here two things.

1. DOCT. *That the true definition of a Christian is to be in Christ.*

'If any man be in Christ.' He may be in the church visible, yet not in Christ; it is not to be baptized into Christ's name, makes a true Christian; but to be in Christ, that is to be grafted into him by faith. And if to be in Christ makes a Christian, then there are but few Christians: Many are in Christ nominally, not really: they are in Christ by profession, not by mystical union. Are they in Christ that do not know him? Are they in Christ who persecute them that are in Christ? Sure such an holy head as Christ will disclaim such spurious members.

2. DOCT. *That whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature.*

For illustration, I shall shew, I. What a new creature is; II. What kind of work it is.

I. What a new creature is: it is a second birth added to the first, John iii. 3. It may be thus described: it is a supernatural work of God's Spirit, renewing and transforming the heart into the divine likeness.

1. The efficient cause of the new creature, is the Holy Ghost: no angel or archangel is able to produce it. Who but God can alter the hearts of men, and turn stones into flesh? If the new creature were not produced by the Holy Ghost, then the greatest glory in a man's conversion would belong to himself: but this glory God will not give to another. The turning of the will to God is from God, Jer. xxxi. 19. 'After I was turned, I repented.'

2. The organical cause, or instrument by which the new creature is formed, is the word of God, James i. 18. 'Of his own will begat he us, by the word or truth.' The word is the seed, out of which springs the flower of the new creature.

3. The matter of which the new creature consists, is the restoring God's image lost by the fall.

Qu. *But doth God in the new creature, give a new soul?*

Ans. No; he doth not bestow new faculties, but new quali-

ties. As in the altering of a lute, the **strings** are not new, but the tune is mended ; so, in the new creature, the substance of the soul is not new, but is new tuned by grace : the heart that before was proud, is now humble ; the eyes, that before were full of lust, are now full of tears. Here are new qualities infused.

II. What kind of work the new creature is.

1<sup>st</sup>, The new creature is a work of divine power ; so much it imports, because it is a creation. The same power which raised Christ from the grave, goes to the production of the new creature, Eph. i. 20. It is a work of greater power to produce the new creature, than to make a world. It is true, in respect of God, all things are alike possible to him : but, as to our apprehension, it requires a greater power to make a new creature, than to make a world : For,

1. When God made the world, he met with no opposition : but when God is about to make a new creature, he meets with opposition ; Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him.

2. It cost God nothing to make the world, but to make the new creature costs him something : Christ himself was fain to become man. In making the world, it was but speaking a word ; but in making the new creature, it cost Christ the shedding of his blood.

3. God made the world in six days ; but he is carrying on the new creature in us all our lives long. The new creature is but begun here, it is not perfected or drawn in all its orient colours till it come to heaven.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The new creature is a work of free-grace. There is nothing in us to move God to make us anew ; by nature we are full of pollution and enmity, yet now God forms the new creature. Behold the banner of love displayed ? The new creature may say, By the grace of God I am what I am. In the creation we may see the strength of God's arm, in the new creature we may see the working of God's bowels. That God should consecrate any heart, and anoint it with grace, is an act of pure love : that he should pluck one out of the state of nature and not another, must be resolved into free-grace, Mat. xi. 26. ' Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' This will increase the saints' triumphs in heaven, that the lot of free-grace should fall upon them, and not on others.

3<sup>dly</sup>, The new creature is a work of rare excellency. A natural man is a lump of earth and sin ; God clothes him, Zech. xi. 8. but upon the new creature is a spiritual glory, as if we should see a piece of clay turned into a sparkling diamond, Cant. iii. 16. ' Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense ?' That is the natural man coming out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed

with all the graces of the Spirit. The new creature must needs be glorious, for it partakes of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. A soul beautified with holiness, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. It is God's lesser heaven, Isa. lvii. 15. In the incarnation, God made himself in the image of man; in the new creation, man is made in the image of God; by our being creatures, we are the sons of Adam; by being new creatures, we are the members of Christ. Reason makes one live the life of a man, the new creature makes him live the life of God: a new creature excels the rational nature, and equals the angelical. It is excellent to hear of Christ being crucified for us, but more excellent to have Christ formed in us.

Concerning the new creature I shall lay down two positions.

*1st Posit.* That it is not in the power of a natural man to convert himself; because it is a new creation. As we cannot make ourselves creatures, so not new creatures.

*Qu.* But why doth God command us to convert ourselves, if we have no power? Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Make you a new heart.'

*Ans.* 1. We once had power. God gave us a stock of holiness, but we lost it. If a master give his servant money to employ in his service, and he waste and embezzle it, may not the master require his money of him? Though we have lost our power to obey, God hath not lost his right to command.

2. Though men cannot convert themselves, and make themselves new creatures, yet they may do more than they do in a tendency to it: they may avoid temptations, they may read the word; the same feet that carry them to a play, will carry them to a sermon; they may implore divine grace: but they do not what they are able; they do not improve the power of nature to the utmost, and put God to the trial whether he will give grace.

3. God is not wanting to them who seek to him for grace. *Deus volentibus non deest*; he is willing to put to his helping hand. With his command there goes a promise, Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Make you a new heart;' and there is a promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart will I give you.'

*2d Posit.* When God converts a sinner, he doth more than use a moral persuasion.

For conversion is a new creation, Eph. iv. 24. The Pelagians talk much of free-will; they say, "the will of man is by nature asleep, and conversion is nothing but the awakening a sinner out of sleep, which is done by moral persuasion." But 'man is by nature dead in sin,' Eph. ii. 1. And God must do more than awaken him, he must enliven him before he be a new creature.

*1st Use.* Terror to such as are not new creatures. Such as are still growing upon the stock of old Adam, who continue in

their sins, and are resolved so to do, these are in the gall of bitterness, and are the most miserable creatures that ever God made, except the devils. These stand in the place where all God's arrows fly; these are the centre where all God's curses meet. An unregenerate person is like one in debt, that is in fear to be arrested; he is every hour in fear to be arrested by death, and carried prisoner to hell. Can that traitor be happy, who is fed by his prince in prison, only to be kept alive for execution? God feeds the wicked as prisoners, they are reserved for the day of wrath, 2 Per. ii. 9. How should this fright men out of their natural condition, and make them restless till they are new creatures.

*2d Use. Trial.* Whether we are new creatures; our salvation depends upon it.

I. I shall shew you the counterfeits of the new creature, or that which seems to be the new creature, and is not.

*1st,* Counterfeit natural honesty, moral virtue, prudence, justice, liberality, temperance; these make a glorious shew in the eye of the world, but differ as much from the new creature, as a meteor from a star. Morality indeed is commendable, and it were well if there were more of it; this our Saviour loves, Mark x. 21. 'Then Jesus beholding him, loved him.' It was a love of compassion, not election. Morality is but nature at best, it doth not amount to grace (1.) There is nothing of Christ in morality; and that fruit is sour which grows not on the root Christ. (2.) Moral actions are done out of a vain-glorious humour, not any respect to God's glory. The apostle calls the heathen magistrates unjust, 1 Cor. vi. 1. While they were doing justice in their civil courts, they were unjust: their virtues became vices, because faith was wanting, and they did all to raise them trophies for their own praise and fame. So that morality is but the wild olive of nature, it doth not amount to grace. Heat water to the highest degree, you cannot make wine of it, it is water still; so, let morality be raised to the highest, it is nature still; it is but old Adam put in a better dress. I may say to a civil man, 'yet lackest thou one thing,' Mark x. 21. Moral virtue may stand with the hatred of godliness. A moral man doth as much hate holiness, as he doth vice. The Stoicks were moralists, and had sublime notions about virtue, yet were the deadliest enemies St. Paul had, Acts xvii. 18. So that this is a counterfeit jewel.

*2d,* Religious education is not the new creature. Education doth much cultivate and refine nature: education is a good wall to plant the vine of grace against, but it is not grace. King Joash was good as long as his uncle Jehoiada lived; but when Jehoiada died, all Joash's religion was buried in his uncle's grave, 2 Kings xii. 2. Have not we seen many who have been

trained up religiously under their parents, and were very hopeful, yet these fair blossoms of hope have been blown off, and they have lived to be a shame to their friends?

3d, A form of godliness is not the new creature. Every bird that hath fine feathers, hath not sweet flesh; all that shine with the golden feathers of profession, are not saints, 2 Tim. iii. 5. 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.' What is a lifeless form? Formality is the ape of piety: formalists may perform all the external parts of religion: pray, fast, give alms. Whatever duties a believer doth in sincerity, the same may a formalist do in hypocrisy. How devout were the Pharisees? How humble was Ahab? What a reformer was Jehu? Yet this was but a formal shew of religion. Dædalus, by art, made images to move of themselves, insomuch that people thought they were living: formalists do so counterfeit, and play a devotion, that others think they are living saints: they are religious mountebanks.

4th, Every change of opinion doth not amount to the new creature: man may change from error to truth, yet be no new creature; here is a change in the head but not in the heart: one may be orthodox in his judgment, yet not cordially embrace the gospel; he may be no papist, yet no true believer. He who is changed only in opinion, is but almost a Christian, and shall be but almost saved.

5th, Every sudden passion, or stirring of the affections, is not the new creature. There may be affections of sorrow: some, upon the reading the history of Christ's passion, may be ready to weep; but it is only a natural tenderness, which relents at any tragical sight. Affections of desire may be stirred, John vi. 'Lord, evermore give us this bread:' but these basely deserted Christ, and would walk no more with him, ver. 66. Many desire heaven, but will not come up to the price. Affections of joy may be stirred; in the parable, the second sort of hearers are said to 'receive the word with joy,' Matth. xii. 20. What was this but to have the affections moved with delight in hearing? Yet, that this did not amount to the new creature, is plain, 1. Because those hearers are said to have no root. 2. Because they fell away, ver. 21. king Herod did hear John Baptist gladly; he was much affected with John's preaching; Where then was the defect? Why was not Herod a new creature? The reason was, because Herod was not reformed by the Baptist's preaching; his affections were moved, but his sin was not removed. Many have sweet motions of heart, and seem to be much affected with the word, but their love to sin is stronger than their love to the word; therefore all their good affections prove abortive, and come to nothing.

6th, One may have trouble for sin, yet not be a new creature.

Trouble of spirit may appear, while God's judgments lie upon men ; when these are removed their trouble ceaseth, Pr. lxxviii. 34. ' When he slew them, then they sought him : nevertheless they did flatter him with their lips.' Metal that melts in a furnace, take it out of the furnace, and it returns to its former hardness : many, in time of sickness, seem to be like melted metal ; What weeping and wringing of hands ? What confessions of sin will they make ? Do not these look like new creatures ? But, as soon as they recover, they are as bad as ever ; their pangs go off again, and it never comes to a new birth.

7th, A man may have the Spirit, yet not be a new creature. The apostle supposeth a case, that one might be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4. A man may have some slight transient work of the Spirit, but it doth not go to the root : he may have the common gifts of the Spirit, but not the special grace ; he may have the Spirit to convince him, not to convert him : the light he hath is like a winter sun, which hath little or no influence, it doth not make him more holy ; he hath the motions of the Spirit, but walks after the flesh.

8th, Every abstaining from sin is not the new creature. This abstaining may be, (1.) From restraining grace, not renewing grace : as God with-held Laban from hurting Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 24. The Lord may restrain men from sin, by the terror of a natural conscience. Conscience stands as the angel with a drawn sword, and saith, Do not this evil. Men may be frightened from sin, but not divorced. (2.) Men may abstain from sin for a while, and then return to it again ; as Saul left off pursuing David for some time, and then hunted him again. This is like a man that holds his breath under water, and then takes breath again, Jer. xxxiv. 15, 16. ' Ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight : but ye turned and polluted my holy name.' (3.) Men may leave gross sin, and yet live in more spiritual sins : leave drunkenness, and live in pride : leave uncleanness, and live in malice : The Pharisee boasted he was no adulterer, but he could not say he was not proud or superstitious ; here he left gross sin, and lived in spiritual sins. (4.) Men may leave sin partially : abstain from some sins, not all : they feed some sin in a corner. Herod left many sins, but one sin he lived in, viz. incest. All this doth not amount to the new creature.

II. I shall shew you wherein the essence of the new creature consists.

1st, In general. To the constituting of the new creature, there must be a great change wrought. He who is a new creature, is not the same man he was. *Alter idem.* He is of another spirit, Numb. xiv. 24. ' My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit.' When the harlot Lais came to one of her old

acquaintance after he was converted, and tempted him to sin, *ego non sum ego*, saith he, “ I am not the same man.”

When one becomes a new creature, there is such a visible change, that all may see it ; therefore it is called a change from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18. Paul a persecutor, when converted, was so altered, that all who saw him, wondered at him, and could scarce believe that he was the same man, Acts ix. 21. as if another soul had lived in the same body. Mary Magdalene, an unchaste sinner, when once savingly wrought upon, what a penitent creature did she become ? Her eyes, that were enticement to lust, she takes penance of them, and washed Christ’s feet with her tears : her hair, which she was proud of, and which was a net to entangle her lovers, she now takes penance of it, and wipes Christ’s feet with it. Thus the new creature makes a visible change. Such as are the same as they were, as vain and proud as ever, here is no new creature to be seen ; for then a mighty change would appear, 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘ And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,’ &c.

But every change doth not evidence the new creature. (1.) There is a change from one extreme to another, from a prodigal to an usurer ; from a Turk to a Papist. This is as if one should recover of one disease and die of another. (2.) There is an outward change, which is like the washing of a swine. Ahab was much changed to outward view, when he ‘ rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth,’ 1 Kings xxi. 27. insomuch that God stands and wonders at him : ‘ Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself :’ Yet, for all this, he was but an hypocrite.

Qu. *What change then is that which is requisite in the new creature ?*

Ans. It is an inward change, a change of heart. Though the heart be not new-made, it is new-moulded, Jer. iv. 14. ‘ Wash thy heart, O Jerusalem.’ Ahab’s clothes were rent, but not his heart. The outward change will do no good without the inward : what will become of them then, who have not so much as an outward change ?

Thus you see in general, that in the production of the new creature, there must be a change.

2dly, More particularly, the change in the new creature consists in two things ; and they are both set down in the text : ‘ old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new.’

I. ‘ Old things are passed away.’ Old pride, old ignorance ; old malice : the old house must be pulled down ere you can set up a new.

Obj. *But if all old things must pass away, then there are no*



*new creatures : who can be quite freed from sin ? Doth not Paul complain of a body of death ?*

*Ans.* We must know that the change wrought in the new creature, though it be a thorough change, yet it is not a perfect change ; sin will remain. As there is a principle of grace, so of corruption ; like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate flesh as well as spirit. Here is a question ariseth.

*Qu.* *If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away, then how far must one put off the old man, that he may be a new creature ?*  
Of which hereafter.

‘ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.’

*Doct.* *That whosoever is in Christ is a new creature.*

We are now upon the trial of the new creature. In it there is a change wrought, and this change consists in two things : which are set down in the text, viz. 1. ‘ Old things are passed away,’ 2. ‘ All things are become new.’

I. ‘ Old things are passed away.’ Old pride, old ignorance, old malice. The old house must be pulled down ere you can set up a new.

*Obj.* *But if all old things must pass away, then there are no new creatures. Who can be quite freed from sin ? Doth not Paul complain of a body of death ?*

*Ans.* We must know the change wrought in the new creature is but imperfect ; as there is a principle of grace, so of corruption ; like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate flesh as well as spirit.

*Qu.* *If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away, then how far must one put off the old man that he may be a new creature ?*

*Ans.* 1. There must be a grieving for the remains of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. ‘ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?’ Paul did not cry out of his sufferings, his being beaten with rods, shipwrecked, stoned ; but (like the bird of paradise) he bemoaned himself for sin. In the new creature there must be *quotidianus mugitus*, a daily mourning for the indwelling presence of corruption ; a child of God doth not wear sin as a gold chain, but as a fetter.

2. In the new creature there must be a detestation of old things ; as one would detest a garment in which is the plague : it is not enough to be angry with sin ; but we must hate it. Psal. cxix. 162. ‘ I hate and abhor lying.’ Hatred is the highest degree of enmity ; and we must hate sin not only for its hurtful effect, but its loathsome nature ; as one hates a toad for its poisonous quality.

3. In the new creature there is an opposition against all old

things: a Christian not only complains of sin, but fights against it, Gal. v. 17.

Qu. *But may not a natural man oppose sin?*

Ans. Yes: but there is a great difference between his opposing sin, and the new creatures opposing it.

1<sup>st</sup>, There is a difference in the manner of opposition. (1.) The natural man opposeth sin, only for the shame of it, as it eclipseth his credit; but the new creature opposeth sin for the filth of it; it is the spirit of mischief; it is like rust to gold, or as a stain to beauty.

2. The natural man doth not oppose all sin. (1.) He doth not oppose inward sins, he fights against such sins as are against the light of a natural conscience; but not against heart sins, the first risings of vain thoughts, the stirrings of anger and concupiscence, the venom and impurity of his nature. (2.) He doth not oppose gospel sins; pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, spiritual barrenness: he is not troubled, that he can love God no more. (3.) He opposeth not complexion-sins; such as the bias of his heart carries him more strongly to, as lust or avarice: he saith of his constitution-sins, as Naaman, 2 Kings v. 18. 'In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant.' But the new creature opposeth all kinds of sin, *odiunt circum speciem*; as he that hates a serpent, hates all kinds of serpents, Psal. cxix. 140. 'I hate every false way.'

2<sup>dly</sup>, There is difference between the natural man's opposing sin, and the new creature's opposing sin, in regard of the motives.

A natural man opposeth sin from carnal motives; to stop the mouth of conscience, and to prevent hell.

But the new creature opposeth sin upon more noble motives; out of love to God, and fear of dishonouring the gospel.

4. In the new creature there is mortifying old corrupt lusts, Gal. v. 24. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.' The new creature is said to be 'dead to sin,' Rom. vi. 11. He is dead as to the love of sin, that it doth not bewitch: and as to the power of it, that it doth not command. The new creature is continually crucifying sin: some limb of the old Adam every day drops off: though sin doth not die perfectly, it dies daily.

A gracious soul thinks he can never kill sin enough: he deals with sin as Joab with Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 14. 'He took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom.' So, with the three darts of faith, prayer, and repentance, a Christian thrusts through the body of sin; he never thinks this Absalom is enough dead.

Try then, if we have this first sign of the new creature, 'old

things are passed away.' There is a grieving for sin, a detesting it, an opposing it, a mortifying it ; this is the passing away of old things, though not in a legal sense, yet in an evangelical ; and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

The second trial of the new creature, is ' all things are become new.' The new creature is new all over : grace, though it be but in part, yet it is in every part.

By nature every branch of the soul is defiled with sin, as every part of wormwood is bitter ; so, in regeneration, every part of the soul is replenished with grace ; therefore grace is called the new man, Eph. iv. 24. Not a new eye, or a new tongue, but a new man ; there are new dispositions, new principles, new aims ; ' all things are become new.'

I. In the new creature there is a new understanding, Eph. iv. 23. ' Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.' The first thing a limner draws in a picture, is the eye : when God newly limns us, and makes us new creatures, the first thing he draws in our souls is a new eye ; the new creature is enlightened to see that which he never saw before.

1. He knows Christ after another manner. An unconverted man, by the light of common grace, may believe Christ to be the Son of God ; but the new creature knows Christ after another guise manner, so as to esteem him above all, to adore him, to touch him by faith, to fetch an healing virtue from him.

2. The new creature knows himself better than he did. When the sun shines into a room, it discovers all the dust and cobwebs in it ; so, when the light of the Spirit shines into the heart, it discovers that corruption which before lay hid ; it shews a man his own vileness and nothingness, Job xl. 4. ' Behold, I am vile.' A wicked man, blinded with self-love, admires himself ; like Narcissus, that seeing his own shadow upon the water, fell in love with it. Saving-knowledge works self-abasement ; ' Lord, thou art in heaven, and I am in hell,' said a martyr. Hath this day-star of knowledge shined on our mind ;

II. The new creature is renewed in his conscience ; the conscience of a natural man is either blind, or dumb, or seared ; but conscience in the new creature is renewed. Let us examine, Doth conscience check for sin ? The least hair makes the eye weep ; and the least sin makes conscience finite. How did David's heart smite him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment ! a good conscience is a star to guide, a register to record, a judge to determine, a witness to accuse or excuse ; if conscience doth all these offices right, then it is a renewed conscience, and speaks peace.

III. In the new creature the will is renewed. An old bowl may have a new bias put into it ; the will having a new bias

of grace put into it, is strongly carried to good. The will of a natural man opposeth God ; when the wind goes one way, and the tide another, then there is a storm : so it is, when God's will goes one way, and ours another ; but when our will goes with God's, as the wind with the tide, then there is a sweet calm of peace in the soul ; the sanctified will answers to God's will, as the echo to the voice, Psal. xxvii. 28. ' When thou saidst, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.' And the will being renewed, like the *primum mobile*, it carries all the affections along with it.

IV. The new creature hath a new conversation. Grace alters a man's walk ; before, he walked proudly, now humbly : before, loosely, now holily ; he makes the word his rule, and Christ's life his pattern, Phil. iii. 20. ' Our conversation is in heaven.' As a ship that is sailing eastward, there comes a gale of wind and blows it westward ; so, before a man did sail hellward, and on a sudden the Spirit of God comes upon him, and blows him heaven-ward ; here is a new conversation. It was a speech of Oecolampadius " I would not speak or do any thing that I thought Jesus Christ would not approve of, if he were here corporeally present." Where there is circumcision of heart, there is circumspection of life ; if we find it thus that ' all things are become new,' then we are new creatures, and shall go to the new Jerusalem when we die.

*Use 3. Exhortation.* Labour to be new creatures ; nothing else will avail us, Gal. vi. 14. ' Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' We are for new things ; we love new fashions, and why not new hearts ? but people are full of prejudices against the new creature.

*Obj. 1.* *If we are new creatures, there must be so much strictness in religion, so much praying and watching, as discourageth.*

*Ans.* (1.) Is there any thing excellent to be obtained without labour ? What pains is taken in searching for a vein of silver, or seeking the pearl ? Men cannot have the world without labour ; and would they have salvation so ? (2.) The labour in religion bears no proportion with the reward. What are a few tears shed to a weight of glory ? The soldier is content to wrestle with difficulties, and undergo a bloody fight, for a glorious victory. In all labour for heaven, there is profit : it is like a man that digs in a gold mine, and carries away all the gold. (3.) Men take more pains to go to hell : what pains doth an ambitious man take to climb to the pinnacle of honour ? Tullia rode over the dead body of her father, to be made queen. How doth the covetous man tire himself, break his sleep, and his peace, to get the world ? Thus some men take more pains in the service of sin, than others do in pursuit of holiness. Men talk of pains in religion ; when God's Spirit comes into one, it turns labour

into delight. It was Paul's heaven to serve God, Rom. vii. 22. 'The ways of wisdom are pleasantness,' Prov. iii. 17. It is like walking among beds of spices, which cast forth a sweet perfume.

Obj. 2. *But if we leave our old company, and become new creatures, we shall be exposed to many reproaches.*

Ans. Who are they that speak evil of religion but such as are evil? *Male de me loquuntur, sed mali*, said Seneca. Besides, is it not better that men reproach us for being good, than that God damn us for being wicked! Matth. v. 11. 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you.' Stars are never the less glorious, though they have ugly names given them, as the bear and the dragon. A saint's reproaches are like a soldier's scars, honourable, 1 Pet. iv. 14. 'If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon you.' While men clip your credit to make it weigh lighter, they make your crown heavier.

Having answered these objections, I come now to re-assume the exhortation, above all things labour do be new creatures.

#### MOTIVES.

1<sup>st</sup>, In this, true Christianity doth consist. It is not baptism makes a Christian; many are no better than baptised heathens. The essential part of religion lies in the new creature, Rom. ii. 29. 'Circumcision is that of the heart.' Every thing hath a name from the better part; we call a man a reasonable creature, because of his soul, which is the more noble part; so one is called a Christian, because he acts from a principle of the new creature, which the carnal man doth not.

2<sup>dly</sup>, It is the new creature fits us for communion with God; we cannot converse with God till then. Birds cannot converse with men unless they had a rational nature put into them, nor can men converse with God, unless, being made new creatures, they partake of the divine nature. Communion with God is a mystery to most: every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king; all that meddle with holy duties, and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven, hath not communion with God: it is only the new creature enjoys God's presence in ordinances, and sweetly converses with him, as a child with a Father.

3<sup>dly</sup>, The necessity of being new creatures.

1. Till then we are odious to God, Zech. xi. 8. 'My soul loathed them.' A sinner is to God worse than a toad; a toad hath no poison, but what God hath put into it; but a sinner hath that which the devil hath put into him, Acts v. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?' A wicked man is possessed with an evil spirit, one man is possessed with the devil of pride, another with the devil of malice; this must needs make persons

odious to God, to be possessed with the devil. Thus it is till we become new creatures.

2. Till we are new creatures, our duties are not accepted with God ; they are but wild grapes, (1.) Because God accepts no man, but where he sees his image. The new creature is called the ‘renewing of God’s image,’ Eph. iv. 24. When they brought Tamerlane a pot of gold, he asked what stamp it had on it, and when he saw the Roman stamp on it, he refused it : so, if God doth not see his own stamp and image on the soul, he rejects the most specious services. (2.) Duties of religion are not accepted without the new creature, because there is that wanting which should make them a sweet favour to God. The holy oil for the tabernacle was to be made of several spices and ingredients, Exod. xxx. 23. Now, if any of these spices had been left out, it had not been pleasing. The unregenerate man leaves out the chief spice in his duties, and that is faith. And, Heb. xi. 6. ‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Faith lays hold on Christ, and so is accepted.

3. Such as are not new creatures, but grow upon the stock of old Adam, get no benefit by ordinances : they are to them as diascordium in a dead man’s mouth ; they lose their virtue : nay, not only ordinances do them no good, but hurt. It were sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison. The word preached is a ‘favour of death ;’ it is not healing, but hardening : nay, Christ himself is accidentally a ‘rock of offence,’ 1 Pet. ii. 7. The wicked stumble at a Saviour, and suck death from the tree of life.

4. Without being new creatures, we cannot arrive at heaven, Rev. xxi. 27. ‘There shall in no-wise enter into it any thing that defileth.’ Heaven is not like Noah’s ark, that received clean and unclean. A sinner is compared to swine, 2 Pet. ii. 22. and shall a swinish creature tread upon the golden pavement of heaven. Indeed the frogs came into king Pharaoh’s court, but in heaven there is no entertainment for such vermin.

It is only the new creature qualifies us for glory : this consecrates the heart, and only the pure in heart shall see God. The new creature elevates the soul, as the loadstone elevates the iron. A soul renewed by grace, is fit to ascend to the heavenly glory.

*4thly,* The excellency of the new creature. (1.) The nobility. (2.) The immortality. (1.) The nobility. The new creature fetcheth its pedigree from heaven ; it is born of God ; God counts none else of the blood royal : it ennobles a man’s spirit : he aspires after the favour of God, and looks no lower than a crown. The new creature raiseth one to honour : he excels the princes of the earth, Psal. lxxxix. 27. and is fellow-commoner with angels.

(2.) The immortality. The new creature is begotten of the

incorruptible seed of the word, and never dies ; it lasts as long as the soul, as angels, as heaven. God hath laid out much cost upon it, and if it perish, he should lose all his cost. When Xerxes destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure ; the new creature is God's temple adorned with all the graces, which he will not suffer to be demolished. Riches take wings ; kings' crowns tumble in the dust : nay, some of the graces may cease ; faith and hope shall be no more, but the new creature abideth for ever, 1 John ii. 27.

*5thly*, The misery of the unregenerate creature ; dying so, I may say so of him, as Christ said of Judas, Mark xiv. 21. ' It were good for that man if he had not been born.' Better have been a toad, a serpent, any thing, if not a new creature ; the old sinner must go into old tophet, Isa. xxx. 33.

Damned caitiffs will have nothing to ease their torments : not one drop of honey in all their gall. In the sacrifice of jealousy there was no oil put to it, Numb. v. In hell there is no oil of mercy put to the sufferings of the damned to lenify them.

Therefore get out of the wild olive of nature : labour to be new creatures, lest you curse yourselves at last. A sinful life will cause a despairing death.

*Qu. What shall we do to be new creatures ?*

*Ans.* 1. Wait on the ordinances. The preaching of the word is the seed of which the new creature is formed ; this is the trumpet which must make the dead in sin come out of their grave.

2. Pray earnestly for the new creature ; ' Lord, thou hast made me once, make me again ; what shall I do with this old heart ? It defiles all it toucheth.' Urge God with his promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. ' A new heart will I give you.' Say, Lord, I am as the dry bones, but thou didst cause breath to come into them, Ezek. xvii. 10. Do the same to me : breath a supernatural life of grace into me.

*Use* 4. Thankfulness. Let such as are new creatures, stand upon mount Gerizzim, blessing and praising God : ascribe all to the riches of God's love ; set the crown upon the head of free grace ; God hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens ; though you have not so much of the world as others, you are happier than the greatest monarchs upon earth ; and, I dare say, you would not change with them. The apostles seldom speak of the new creation, but they join some thankful praises with it, 1 Pet. i. 3. ' Blessed be God, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope,' Col. i. 12. ' Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance in light.' The new creature is a sign of election, a badge of adoption. What distinguishing

love is this, that God should make any of us new creatures, when he hath left the greatest part of the world to perish in their sins? Such as are patterns of mercy, should be trumpets of praise.



## THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT.

### CHAP. I.

#### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT.

PHIL. iv. 11. *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

THESE words are brought in by way of prolepsis, to anticipate and prevent an objection. The apostle had, in the former verses, laid down many grave and heavenly exhortations; among the rest, ‘to be careful for nothing,’ ver. 6. Not to exclude, 1. A prudential care; for, ‘he that provideth not for his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,’ 1 Tim. v. 8. Nor, 2. A religious care; for, we must give all ‘diligence to make our calling and election sure,’ 2 Pet. i. 10. But, 3. To exclude all anxious care about the issues and events of things; ‘take no thought for your life, what you shall eat,’ Matth. vi. 25. And in this sense it should be a Christian’s care not to be careful. The word in the Greek [careful] comes from a primitive, that signifies “to cut the heart in pieces,” a soul-dividing care; take heed of this. We are bid to ‘commit our way unto the Lord,’ Psal. xxxvii. 5. The Hebrew word is, ‘roll thy way upon the Lord.’ It is our work to cast care, 1 Pet. v. 7. And it is God’s work to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of his hand.

Care, when it is eccentric, either distrustful or distracting, is very dishonourable to God; it takes away his providence, as if he sat in heaven and minded not what became of things here below; like a man that makes a clock, and then leaves it to go of itself. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and usually, while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die. Care is a spiritual canker, that doth waste and dispirit; we may sooner by our care add a furlong to our grief, than a cubit to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curse, ‘They shall eat their bread with carefulness,’ Ezek. xii. 19. Better fast than eat of that bread. ‘Be careful for nothing.’

Now, lest any one should say, yea, Paul thou preacheest that



to us, which thou hast scarce learned thyself; hast thou learned not to be careful? The apostle seems tacitly to answer that, in the words of the text; 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'

A speech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of gold upon the crowns and diadems of princes. The text doth branch itself into these two general parts,

I. The scholar, Paul: 'I have learned.'

II. The lesson: 'in every state to be content.'

CHAP. II. The first branch of the text, the scholar, with the first proposition.

I begin with the first. I. The scholar, and his proficiency; 'I have learned.' Out of which I shall, by the bye, observe two things by way of paraphrase, 1. It is not [Gr. *ekoufa*,] but [Gr. *emuthon*.] The apostle doth not say, I have heard, that in every case I should be content; but, I have learned. Whence, 1 Doct. *It is not enough for Christians to hear their duty, but they must learn their duty.* It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. St. Paul was a practitioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There was four sorts of ground in the parable, Luke viii. 5. And but one good ground: an emblem of this truth, many hearers, but few learners. There are two things which keep us from learning.

1. Slighting what we hear. Christ is the pearl of price: when we disesteem this pearl, we shall never learn either its value, or its virtue. The gospel is a rare mystery; in one place (Acts xx. 24.) It is called the gospel of grace, in another, (1 Cor. iv. 4.) The gospel of glory: because in it, as in a transparent glass, the glory of God is resplendent. But he that hath learned to contemn this mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it: he that looks upon the things of heaven as things by the bye, and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some politic design to be of greater importance; this man is in the high road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace. Who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning?

2. Forgetting what we hear. If a scholar have his rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn, James i. 25. Aristotle calls the memory the scribe of the soul; and Bernard calls it the stomach of the soul, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits, we have great memories in others things; we remember that which is vain. Cyrus could remember the name of every soldier in his huge army; we remember injuries. This is to fill a precious cabinet with dung; but, *quam, facilis oblivio boni?* As Hierom saith, how soon do we forget the sacred

truths of God? We are apt to forget three things; our faults, our friends, our instructions. Many Christians are like sieves; put a sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out; so, while they are hearing of a sermon, they remember something; but take the sieve out of the water, as soon as they are gone out of the church, all is forgotten. 'Let these sayings (saith Christ) sink down into your ears;' Luke ix. 44. In the original it is, put these saying into your ears; as a man that would hide a jewel from being stolen, locks it up safe in his chest. Let them sink; the word must not only fall as dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructify. Oh, how oft doth Satan, that fowl of the air, pick up the good seed that is sown!

*Use.* Let me put you upon a serious trial. Some of you have heard much; you have lived forty, fifty, sixty years, under the blessed trumpet of the gospel; what have you learned? You may have heard a thousand sermons, and yet not learned one. Search your consciences.

1. You have heard much against sin: are you hearers? or are you scholars?

How many sermons have you heard against covetousness, that it is the root on which pride, idolatry, treason, do grow? 2 Tim. iv. 2. and 4. One calls it a metropolitan sin: it is a complex evil, it doth twist a great many sins in with it. There is hardly any sin, but covetousness is a main ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the horse-leech, that cry, Give, give. How much have you heard against rash anger; that it is a short frenzy, a dry drunkenness; that it rests in the bosom of fools; and upon the least occasion do your spirits begin to take fire: How much have you heard against swearing? It is Christ's express mandate, 'swear not at all,' Mat. vi. 34. This sin, of all others, may be termed the unfruitful work of darkness, Eph. v. 11. It is neither sweetened with pleasure, nor enriched with profit (the usual vermilion wherewith Satan doth paint sin.) Swearing is forbidden with a *subpœna*. While the swearer shoots his oaths, like flying arrows at God to pierce his glory, God shoots a flying roll of curses against him, Zech. v. 2. And do you make your tongue a racket by which you toss oaths as tennis-balls? Do you sport yourselves with oaths, as the Philistines did with Samson, which will at last pull the house about your ears? Alas! How have they learned what sin is, that have not learned to leave sin? Doth he know what a viper is, that will play with it?

3. You have heard much of Christ, have you learned Christ? The Jews (as Jerom saith) carried Christ in their Bibles, but

not in their heart ; their sound ‘ went into all the earth,’ Rom. x. 18. The prophets and apostles were as trumpets, whose sound went abroad into the world ; yet many thousands who heard the noise of these trumpets had not learned Christ, ‘ they have not all obeyed,’ ver. 16.

1. A man may know much of Christ, and yet not learn Christ ; the devils knew Christ, Matth. i. 24.

2. A man may preach Christ, and yet not learn Christ, as Judas and the pseudo apostles, Phil. v. 15.

A man may profess Christ, and yet not learn Christ ; there are many professors in the world that Christ will profess against, Matth. vii. 22, 23.

Qu. *What is it then to learn Christ ?*

Ans. 1. To learn Christ, is, to be made like Christ ; when the divine characters of his holiness are engraven upon our hearts. ‘ We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image,’ 2 Cor. iii. 18. There is a metamorphosis made : a sinner, viewing Christ’s image in the glass of the gospel, is transformed into that image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true saint is a divine landscape or picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively portrayed and drawn forth. He hath the same spirit, the same judgment, the same will, with Jesus Christ.

2. To learn Christ, is to believe in him : ‘ My Lord, my God,’ John xx. 28. When we do not only *credere Deum*, but *in Deum* ; which is the actual application of Christ to ourselves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our souls. You have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, ‘ My Jesus :’ Be not offended if I tell you, the devil can say his creed as well as you.

3. To learn Christ, is to love Christ. When we have bible-conversations, our lives, as rich diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the church of God, Phil. i. 17. and are (in some sense) parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with the original. So much for the first notion of the word.

CHAP. III. Concerning the second proposition.

I. This word ‘ I have learned,’ is a word imports difficulty, it shews how hardly the apostle came by contentment of mind ; it was not bred in nature. St. Paul did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it. It cost him many a prayer and tear, it was taught him by the Spirit.

Whence Doctr. 2. *Good things are hard to come by.* The business of religion is not so facile as most do imagine. ‘ I have learned,’ saith St. Paul. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin, this is natural, Pl. lvi. 3. and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a spring. It is an easy thing to be wick-

ed : hell will be taken without storm ; but matters of religion must be learned. To cut the flesh is easy, but to prick a vein and not cut an artery is hard. The trade of sin needs not to be learned, but the art of divine contentment is not achieved without holy industry : ‘ I have learned.’

There are two pregnant reasons, why there must be so much study and exercitation.

1. Because spiritual things are against nature. Every thing in religion is antipodes to nature. There are in religion two things, *credenda et facienda*, and both are against nature. 1. *Credenda*, matters of faith ; as, for men to be justified by the righteousness of another, to become a fool that he may be wise, to save all by losing all ; this is against nature. 2. *Facienda*, matters of practice ; as, 1. Self-denial ; for a man to deny his own wisdom, and see himself blind ; his own will, and have it melted into the will of God : plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that sin, which is the favourite, and lies nearest to the heart ; for a man to be dead to the world, and in the midst of want to abound ; for him to take up the cross, and follow Christ, not only in golden, but in bloody paths ; to embrace religion, when it is dressed in night-clothes, all the jewels of honour and preferment being pulled off ; this is against nature, and therefore must be learned. Self-examination ; for a man to take his heart (as a watch) all in pieces : to set up a spiritual inquisition, or court of conscience, and traverse things in his own soul ; to take David’s candle and lantern, Psal. cxix. 105. and search for sin : nay, as judge to pass the sentence upon himself, 2 Sam. xxxiv. 17. this is against nature, and will not easily be attained to without learning. (3.) Self-reformation. To see a man as Caleb of another spirit, walking antipodes to himself, the current of his life altered, and running into the channel of religion ; this is wholly against nature. When a stone ascends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent : the motion of the soul heaven-ward, is a violent motion, it must be learned ; flesh and blood is not skilled in these things ; nature can no more cast out nature, than Satan can cast out Satan.

2. Because spiritual things are above nature. There are some things in nature that are hard to find out, as the causes of things, which are not learned without study. Aristotle, a great philosopher, (whom some have called an eagle fallen from the clouds), yet could not find out the motion of the river Euripus, therefore threw himself into it ; what then are divine things, which are in sphere above nature, and beyond all human disquisition ? as the Trinity, the hypostatical union, the mystery of faith to believe against hope : only God’s Spirit can light our candle here. The apostle calls these ‘ the deep things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. The gospel is full of jewels, but they are locked

up from sense and reason. The angels in heaven are searching into these sacred depths, 1 Pet. i. 22.

*Use.* Let us beg the Spirit of God to teach us : we must be *divinitas edoculi* ; the eunuch could read, but he could not understand, till Philip joined himself to his chariot, Acts viii. 29. God's Spirit must join itself to our chariot : he must teach, or we cannot learn ; ' All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.' Isa. liv. 13. A man may read the figure on the dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the sun shine upon the dial ; we may read the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpose till the Spirit of God shine into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Oh, implore this blessed Spirit, it is God's prerogative royal to teach. ' I am the Lord thy God, that teacheth thee to profit,' Isa. xlviii. 17. Ministers may tell us our lesson, God only can teach us ; we have lost both our hearing and eye-sight, therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever since Eve listened to the serpent, we have been deaf ; and since she looked on the tree of knowledge, we have been blind ; but when God comes to teach, he removes these impediments, Isa. xxxv. 5. We are naturally dead, Eph. ii. 1. who will go about to teach a dead man ? Yet, behold, God undertakes to make dead men to understand mysteries ! God is the grand teacher. This is the reason the word preached works so differently upon men ; Two in a pew ; the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the ordinances as a dead child at the breast, and gets no nourishment. What is the reason ? because the heavenly gale of the Spirit blows upon one, and not upon the other ; one hath the ' anointing of God, which teacheth him all things,' 1 John ii. 27. the other hath it not. God's Spirit speaks sweetly, but irresistibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could sing the new song, but those who were sealed in their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 2. reprobates could not sing it. Those that are skilful in the mysteries of salvation, must have the seal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, Lord, breathe thy Spirit into thy word ; and we have a promise, which may add wings to prayer, Luke xi. 13. ' If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him ?'

And thus much of the first part of the text, the scholar, which I intended only as a short gloss or paraphrase.

CHAP. IV. *The second branch of the text, the lesson itself, with the proposition.*

II. I come to the second, which is the main thing, the lesson itself : ' In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and is certainly more to be wondered at in St. Paul, that he knew how to turn himself to every condition, than all the learning in the world be-

fides, which hath been so applauded in former ages by Julius Cæsar, Ptolemy, Xenophon, the great admirers of learning.

The text hath but few words in it, 'in every state content : ' but if that be true, which one Fulgentius said, that the most golden sentence is ever measured by brevity and suavity, then, this is a most accomplished speech ; here is *magnum in parvo*. The text is like a precious jewel, little in quantity, but great in worth and value.

The main proposition I shall insist upon, is this, that a gracious spirit is a contented spirit. The doctrine of contentment is very superlative, and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Christians.

1. It is an hard lesson. The angels in heaven had not learned it ; they were not contented. Though their estate was very glorious, yet they were still soaring aloft, and aimed at something higher, Jude, ver. 6. 'The angels which kept not their first estate.' They kept not their estate, because they were not contented with their estate. Our first parents, clothed with the white robe of innocency in paradise, had not learned to be content ; they had aspiring hearts, and thinking their human nature too low and home-spun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be as gods, Gen. iii. 5. Though they had the choice of all the trees of the garden, yet none would content them but the tree of knowledge, which they supposed would have been as an eyesalve to have made them omniscient. Oh then, if this lesson were so hard to learn in innocency, how hard shall we find it, who are clogged with corruption.

2. It is of universal extent, it concerns all. 1<sup>st</sup>, It concerns rich men. One would think it needless to press those to contentment whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather persuade them to be humble and thankful, nay, but I say, be content. Rich men have their discontents as well as others ; as appears, (1.) When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented, that they have no more ; they would make the hundred talents a thousand. A man in wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts : covetousness is a dry dropsey ; an earthly heart is like the grave, that is never satisfied, Prov. xxx. 16. Therefore I say to you, rich men, be content. (2.) Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates (which is seldom) yet, though they have estate enough, they have not honour enough ; if their barns are full enough, yet their turrets are not high enough. They would be some body in the world, as Theudus, 'who boasted himself to be some body,' Acts v. 36. They never go so cheerfully as when the wind of honour and applause fills their sails ; if this wind be down, they are discontented. One would think Haman had as much as his proud heart could desire : he was set above all the princes, advanced

upon the pinnacle of honour to be the second man in the kingdom, *Eth. iii. 1.* Yet in the midst of all his pomp, because Mordecai would not uncover and kneel, he is discontented, *ver. 2.* and full of wrath, *ver. 5.* and there was no way to assuage this pleurisy of revenge, but by letting all the Jews' blood, and offering them up in sacrifice. The itch of honour is seldom allayed without blood; therefore I say to you rich men, be content. (3.) Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their honour and magnificent titles; yet they have not always contentment in their relations. She that lies in the bosom, may sometimes blow the coals; as Job's wife who in a pet would have him fall out with God himself, 'Curse God, and die.' Sometimes children cause discontent; how often is it seen that the mother's milk doth nourish a viper? and that he that once sucked her breast, goes about to suck her blood? Parents do often of grapes gather thorns, and of figs thistles; children are sweet brier. Like the rose, which is a fragrant flower; but, as Basil saith, it hath its prickles. Our relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed: they have in them more dregs than spirits, and are like that river Plutarch speaks of, where the waters in the morning run sweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no charter of exemption granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be content.

*2dly,* The doctrine of contentment concerns poor men. You that do suck so liberally from the breasts of providence, be content; it is an hard lesson, therefore it had need be set upon the sooner. How hard is it when the livelihood is even gone, a great estate boiled away almost to nothing, than to be contented. The means of subsistence is in scripture called our life, because it is the very sinews of life. The woman in the gospel spent 'all her living upon the physicians,' *Luke viii. 43.* In the Greek it is, she spent her whole life upon the physicians, because she spent her means by which she should live. It is much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be content; but, though hard, it is excellent; and the apostle here had 'learned in every state to be content.' God had brought St. Paul into as great variety of conditions as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; else sure he could never have gone through it with so much cheerfulness. See into what vicissitudes this blessed apostle was cast: 'we are troubled on every side,' *2 Cor. iv. 8.* There was the sadness of his condition; but not distressed, there was his content in that condition: we are perplexed, there is his affliction; but not in despair, there is his contentation. And, if we read a little further, *2 Cor. xi. 4.* 'In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults,' &c. There is his trouble: and behold his

content, ver. 10. 'As having nothing, yet possessing all things.' When the apostle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that sweet contentment of mind (which was like music in his soul) he possessed all. We read a short map or history of his sufferings, 2 Cor. ix. 23, 24, 25. 'In prisons more frequent, in deaths oft,' &c. Yet behold the blessed frame and temper of his spirit, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' Which way soever providence did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity, that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent : he could be either on the top of Jacob's ladder, or the bottom ; he could sing either *placencia* or *lachrymæ*, the dirge or the anthem ; he could be any thing that God would have him : 'I know how to want, and how to abound ;' here is a rare pattern for us to imitate. Paul, in regard of his faith and courage, was like a cedar, he could not be stirred ; but for his outward condition, he was like a reed bending every way with the wind of providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that, 'I know how to be full :' and when a boisterous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that, 'I know how to be hungry.' St. Paul was (as Aristotle speaks) like a die that hath four squares ; throw it which way you will, it falls upon a bottom : let God throw the apostle which way he would, he fell upon this bottom of contentment. A contented spirit is like a watch : though you carry it up and down with you, yet the spring of it is not shaken, nor the wheels out of order ; but the watch keeps its perfect motion : so it was with St. Paul, tho' God carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other ; the spring of his heart was not broken ; the wheels of his affections were not disordered, but kept their constant motion towards heaven ; still content. The ship that lies at anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks ; flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them ; a Christian, having cast anchor in heaven, his heart never sinks ; a gracious spirit is a contented spirit. This is a rare art ; Paul did not learn it at the feet of Gamaliel. 'I am instructed,' ver. 12. I am initiated into this holy mystery ; as if he had said, I have gotten the divine art, I have the knack of it ; God must make us right artists. If we should put some men to an art that they are not skilled in, how unfit would they be for it ? Put an husbandman to limning or drawing pictures, what strange work would he make ? This is out of his sphere. Take a limner that is exact in laying of colours, and put him to plough, or set him to planting or grafting of trees, this is not his art, he is not skilled in it ; bid a natural man live by faith, and when all things go cross be contented ; you bid him do what he hath no skill in, you may



as well bid a child guide the stern of a ship ; to live contented upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts, is an art which “ flesh and blood hath not learned ;” Nay, many of God’s own children, who excel in some duties of religion, when they come to this of contentment, how do they bungle ? They have scarce commenced masters of this art.

CHAP. V. *The resolving of some questions.*

For the illustration of this doctrine, I shall propound these questions.

Qu. 1. *Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented ?*

Ans. Yes ; for else he is not a saint, but a stoic. Rachel did well to weep for her children, there was nature ; but her fault was, she refused to be comforted, there was discontent. Christ himself was sensible, when he sweat great drops of blood, and said, ‘ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,’ Mat. xxvi. 39. yet he was contented, and sweetly submitted his will : ‘ Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ The apostle bids us ‘ humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God,’ 2 Pet. v. 6. which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

Qu. 2. *Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented ?*

Ans. Yes : ‘ Unto thee I opened my cause,’ Jer. xx. 12. and ‘ David poured out his complaint before the Lord,’ Ps. cxlii. 2. We may cry to God, and desire him to write down all our injuries ? shall not the child complain to his father ? When any burden is upon the spirit, prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart. Hannah’s spirit was burdened ; ‘ I am (says she) a woman of a troubled spirit,’ 1 Sam. i. 18. Now, having prayed, and wept, she went away, and was no more sad ; only here is the difference between a holy complaint, and a discontented complaint ; in the one we complain to God, in the other we complain of God.

Qu. 3. *What is it properly that contentment doth exclude ?*

Ans. There are three things which contentment doth banish out of its diocese, and can by no means consist with it.

1. It excludes a vexatious repining ; this is properly the daughter of discontent. ‘ I mourn in my complaint,’ Psal. lv.

2. He doth not say I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart ; it is a rising up against God. When the sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam ; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boils off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an uneven discomposure : when a man saith,

I am in such straits, that I know not how to evolve or get out, I shall be undone. Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray or meditate, &c. He is not himself: just as when an army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that; the army is put into disorder: so a man's thoughts run up and down distracted. Discontent doth dislocate and unjoint the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a childish despondency; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate, or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins *succumbere oneri*, to faint and sink under it. For care is to the mind as a burden to the back; it loads the spirits, and, with overloading, sinks them. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit.

CHAP. VI. *Shewing the nature of contentment.*

Having answered these questions, I shall, in the next place, come to describe this *atarkeia*, or contentment.

It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself in an equal poise in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms.

1. Contentment is a divine thing, it becomes ours, not by acquisition, but infusion; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul: it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of an heavenly birth; it is therefore very observable that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes in equipage; 'but godliness with contentment is great gain,' 1 Tim. vi. 6. Contentment being a consequent of godliness, or concomitant, or both; I call it divine, to contradistinguish it to that contentment, which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this contentment, but it was only the shadow and picture of it; the beryl, not the true diamond; theirs was but civil, this is sacred; theirs was only from principles of reason, this of religion; theirs was only lighted at nature's torch, this at the lamp of scripture: Reason may a little teach contentment; as thus: Whatever my condition be, this is what I am born to; and if I meet with crosses, it is but catholic misery; all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled? Reason may suggest this; and indeed, this may be rather constraint; but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, religion can only bring this into the soul's exchequer.

2. Contentment is an intrinsical thing; it lies within a man; not in the bark, but in the root. Contentment hath both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam hath not its light from the air; the beams of comfort which a contented man hath; do not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit, 'the heart knows its own grief,'

Prov. xxiv. 10. So contentment lies within the soul, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this blessed contentment; it is a spiritual thing, and ariseth from spiritual grounds, viz. “the apprehension of God’s love.” When there is a tempest without, there may be music within; a bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart; outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christian’s heart, where contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearl of contentment, unless we are willing to part with it; for it is locked up in the cabinet of the heart: the soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of contentment, is like Noah in the ark, that can sing in the midst of a deluge.

3. Contentment is an habitual thing, it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom; it is a settled temper of the heart. One action doth not denominate; he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so: but he is said to be liberal, that is ‘given to liberality,’ Rom. xii. 13. That is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor; so he is said to be a contented man that is given to contentment. It is not casual but constant. Aristotle in his rhetoric, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from passion, and those which arise from complexion; the pale face may look red when it blusheth, but this is only a passion; he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man, who is so upon an occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased; but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

#### CHAP. VII. *Reasons pressing to holy contentment.*

Having opened the nature of contentment, I come next to lay down some reasons, or arguments to contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The first is God’s precept. It is charged upon us as a duty; ‘be content with such things as you have,’ Heb. xiii. 5. The same God who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we run ourselves into a spiritual *premunire*. God’s word is a sufficient warrant; it hath authority in it, and must *superfedeas*, or sacred spell to discontent. *Ipse dixit* was enough among Pythagoras’ scholars; “Be it enacted,” is the royal stile. God’s word must be the star that guides, and his will the weight that moves our obedience: His will is a law, and hath majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience; our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging sea, which at his word is stilled, Matt. viii. 26.

2. The second reason enforcing contentment, is, God’s pro-

mife ; for he hath said, ‘ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,’ Heb. xiii. 5. Where God hath engaged himself, under hand and seal, for our necessary provisions. If a king should say to one of his subjects, I will take care for thee : as long as I have any crown-revenues, thou shalt be provided for ; if thou art in danger, I will secure thee : if in want, I will supply thee ; would not that subject be content ? Behold, God hath here made a promise to the believer, and as it were entered into bond for his security, ‘ I will never leave thee ;’ shall not this charm down the devil of discontent ? ‘ Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive,’ Jer. xlix. 11. Methinks I see the godly man on his death-bed much discontented, and hear him complaining what will become of my wife and children when I am dead and gone ? ‘ They may come to poverty ; faith God, ‘ trouble not thyself, be content,’ I will take care of thy children ; and ‘ let thy widow trust in me.’ God hath made a promise to us, ‘ that he will not leave us,’ and hath entailed the promise upon our wife and children ; and will not this satisfy ? True faith will take God’s single bond without calling for witnesses.

Be content, by virtue of a decree. Whatever our condition be, God the umpire of the world hath from everlasting decreed that condition for us, and by his providence ordered all appertinances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himself, who hath placed me here ; where I am in an higher sphere or in a lower ? Not chance or fortune, (as the purblind heathens imagined) ; no, it is the wise God that hath by his providence fixed me in this orb ; we must act that scene which God would have us ; say not, such an one hath occasioned this to me, look not too much at the under wheel. We read in Ezekiel, of a wheel within a wheel, Ezek. i. 16. God’s decree is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and his providence is the inner-wheels that moves all the rest. God’s providence is that helm, which turns about the whole ship of the universe. Say then, as holy David, ‘ I was silent, because thou, Lord, didst it.’ Psal. xxxix, 9. God’s providence (which is nothing else but the carrying on of his decree) should be a *superjedeas* and counterpoise against discontent ; God hath set us in our station, and he hath done it in wisdom.

We fancy such a condition of life is good for us ; whereas if we were our own carvers, we should oft cut the worst piece. Lot, being put to his choice, did choose Sodom, Gen. xiii. 10. Which soon after was burned with fire. Rachel was very desirous of children, ‘ Give me children or I die ;’ Gen. xxx. And it cost her her life in bringing forth a child. Abraham was earnest for Ishmael, ‘ O that Ishmael may live before thee !’ Gen. xvii. 18. But he had little comfort either of him

or his feed; he was born a son of strife, 'his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him.' The disciples wept for Christ's leaving the world, they chose his corporeal presence; whereas it was best for them that Christ should be gone, for 'else the Comforter would not come,' John xvi. 7. David chose the life of his child, 'he wept and fasted for it,' 2 Sam. xii. 16. Whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual monument of his shame. We stand oft in our own light; if we should sort, or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. It is not well for the child that the parent doth chuse for it? Were it left to itself, it would perhaps chuse a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxysm calls for wine which if he had, it were little better than poison: it is well for the patient, that he is at the physician's appointment.

The consideration of a decree determining, and a providence disposing all things that fall out, should work our hearts to holy contentment. The wise God hath ordered our condition: if he sees it better for us to abound, we shall abound; if he sees it better for us to want, we shall want; be content to be at God's disposal.

God sees, in his infinite wisdom, the same condition is not convenient for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another; one season of weather will not serve all men's occasions; one needs sunshine, another rain: one condition of life will not fit every man, no more than one suit of apparel will fit every body: prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater stock of grace, more faith and patience; he can 'gather grapes of thorns,' pick some comfort out of the cross; every one cannot do this. Another man is seated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it; perhaps it is a place requires more parts of judgment, which every one is not capable of; perhaps he can use his estate better; he hath a public heart as well as a public place. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different orbs and spheres; some higher, some lower: one man desires health, God sees sickness is better for him; God will work health out of sickness, by bringing the body of death, into a consumption. Another man desires liberty, God sees restraint better for him; he will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give a check to the sinful disputes and cavils of our hearts; shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a decree, and ordered by a providence? Is this to be a child or a rebel?

CHAP. VIII. *Use I. Shewing how a Christian may make his life comfortable.*

It shews how a Christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an heaven upon earth, be the times what they will; viz. By christian contentment, Prov. xv. 13. The comfort of life doth not stand in having much; it is Christ's maxim, 'man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he doth possess,' Luke xii. 15. But it is in being contented. Is not the bee as well contented with feeding on the dew, or sucking from a flower, as the ox that grazeth on the mountains? Contentment lies within a man, in the heart: and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our barns filled, but our mind quiet. The contented man (saith Seneca) is the happy man; discontent is a fretting humour, which dries the brains, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life; discontent makes a man that he doth not enjoy what he doth possess. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will imbitter and poison all. Comfort depends upon contentment; Jacob went halting, when the sinew upon the hollow of his thigh shrank; so, when the sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as necessary to keep the life comfortable, as oil is necessary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? We may have it if we will. A Christian may carve out what condition he will to himself. Why dost thou complain of thy troubles? It is not trouble that troubles, but discontent; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it; it is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Christian sad: a contented mind would sail above these waters: but when there is a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks. Do therefore as the mariners, pump the water out, and stop this spiritual leak in thy soul, and no troubles can hurt thee.

CHAP. IX. *Use II. A check to the discontented Christian.*

Here is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical. Some not content with their calling which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the plough to the throne; who like the spider in the Proverbs, 'will take hold with her hands, and be in kings' palaces,' Prov. xxx. 28. Others from the shop to the pulpit, Numb. xii. 2. They would be in the temple of honour, before they are in the temple of virtue: who step into Moses's chair, without Aaron's bells and pomegranates; like apes, which do most shew their deformity when they are climb-

ing. Is it not enough that God hath bestowed gifts upon men, in private to edify ; that he hath enriched them with many mercies ? But, ‘ seek they the priesthood also ? ’ Numb. xvi. 9. What is this but discontent arising from high-flown pride ? These do secretly tax the wisdom of God ; that he hath not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better. One man commends this kind of life, another commends that, one man thinks a country life best, another a city life ; the foldier thinks it best to be a merchant : and the merchant to be a foldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God would have them. How is it that no man is contented ? Very few Christians have learned St. Paul’s lesson : neither poor nor rich know how to be content, they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, 1. Envious ; they malign those that are above them. Another’s prosperity is an eye-sore. When God’s candle shines upon their neighbour’s tabernacle, this light offends them. In the midst of wants men can (in this sense) abound, viz. in envy and malice ; an envious eye is an evil eye. 2. They learn to be querulous, still complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them ; they are ever telling their wants, they want this and that comfort ; whereas their greatest want is a contented spirit. Those that are well enough content with their sins, yet are not content with their condition.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be covetous ; thirsting insatiably after the world, and by unjust means scraping it together ; their ‘ right hand is full of bribes,’ as the Psalmist expresseth it, Ps. lvi. 10. Put a good cause in one scale, and a piece of gold in the other, and the gold weighs heaviest. There are (saith Solomon) four things that say, ‘ It is not enough,’ Prov. xxx. 15. I may add a fifth, viz. the heart of a covetous man. So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

Never certainly since the creation did this sin of discontent reign, or rather rage, more than in our times ; never was God more dishonoured : you can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent of his heart ; every one slips out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too freely and fluently.

If we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good look from us, but presently we are sick of discontent, and ready to die out of an humour. If God will not forgive the people of Israel for their lusts, they bid him take their lives ; they must have quails to their mamma. Ahab, though a king, (and one would think his crown-lands had been sufficient for him, yet) is fullen and discontented for Naboth’s vineyard. Joab, though

a good man and a prophet, yet is ready to die in a pet, Jonah iv. 8. And because God killed his gourd, kill me too, saith he. Rachel, 'Give me children, or I die;' she had many blessings, if she could have seen them, but wanted this contentation. God will supply our wants, but must he satisfy our lusts too; Many are discontented for a very trifle! another hath a better dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. Nero, not content with his empire, was troubled that the musician had more skill in playing than he: how fantastic are some, that pine away in discontent for the want of those things, which, if they had, would but render them more ridiculous?

CHAP. X. Use III. *A suasive to contentment.*

It exhorts us to labour for contentation; this is that which doth beautify and bespangle a Christian, and, as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Obj. *But, methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, alas! how is it possible to be contented? The Lord hath made my chain heavy, Lam. iii. 7. 'He hath cast me into a very sad condition.'*

Ans. There is no sin, but labours either to hide itself under some mask; or, if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate itself by some apology. This sin of discontent I find very witty in its apologies, which I shall first discover, and then make a reply. We must lay it down as a rule, that discontent is a sin; so that all the pretences and apologies wherewith it labours to justify itself, are but the painting and dressing of a strumpet.

§ 1. The first apology that discontent makes answered.

The first apology which discontent makes is this; I have lost a child. Paulina, upon the loss of her children, was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she had like to have intombed herself in her own discontent; our love to relations is oftentimes more than our love to religion.

Reply 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he takes away. If we must 'in every thing give thanks,' 1 Thess. v. 18. then in nothing be discontented.

Reply 2. Perhaps God hath taken away the cistern, that he may give you the more of the spring; he hath darkened the star-light, that you may have more sun-light. God intends you shall have more of himself, and is not he better than ten sons? Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the comforts of the world run dregs; those which come out of the granary of the promise, are pure and sweet.

Reply 3. Your child was not given, but lent, 'I have, saith Hannah, lent my son to the Lord,' 1 Sam. i. 21. She lent him! The Lord hath lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent; what a man lends, he may call for again when he pleases. God hath put out a child to thee a while to nurse;



wilt thou be displeased if he take his child home again? O be not discontented that a mercy is taken away from you, but rather be thankful that it was lent you so long.

*Reply 4.* Suppose your child be taken from you, either he was good or bad; if he was rebellious, you have not so much parted with a child, as a burden; you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you: if he was religious, then remember, he is taken from the evil to come, Isa. lviii. 1. and placed in his centre of felicity. This lower region is full of gross and hurtful vapours; how happy are those who are mounted into the celestial orbs! the righteous is taken away; in the original it is, he is gathered; a wicked child is cut off, but the pious child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them; so hath God gathered thy child as a sweet flower, that he may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a Christian be discontented? Why should he weep excessively? ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves,’ Luke xxiii. 28. So, could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, weep not for us, who are happy; we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; the Prince of Peace is embracing us, and kissing us with the kisses of his lips: be not troubled at our preferment; ‘weep not for us,’ but weep for yourselves, who are in a sinful sorrowful world: you are in the valley of tears, but we are on the mountain of spices; we have gotten to our harbour, but you are still tossing upon the waves of inconstancy. O Christian, be not discontented that thou hast parted with such a child; but rather rejoice that thou hadst such a child to part with. Break forth into thankfulness. What an honour is it to a parent to beget such a child, that while he lives increaseth the joy of the glorified angels, Luke xx. 10. and when he dies, increaseth the number of the glorified saints.

*Reply 5.* If God hath taken away one of your children, he hath left you more, he might have stripped you of all. He took away Job’s comforts, his estate, his children; and indeed his wife was left, but as a cross. Satan made a bow of this rib (as Chrysostom speaks) and shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have him shot to the heart; ‘Curse, God and die:’ but Job had upon him the breast-plate of integrity; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces; still he is content, still he blesteth God. O think how many mercies you still enjoy; yet our base hearts are more discontented at one loss, than thankful for an hundred mercies. God hath plucked one bunch of grapes from you; but how many precious clusters are left behind?

*Obj.* But it was my only child the staff of my age, the seed of.

*my comfort, and the only blossom out of which my ancient family did grow.*

*Ans.* 1. God hath promised you (if you belong to him) ‘a name better than of sons and daughters,’ Isa. lvi. 5. Is he dead that should have been the monument to have kept up the name of a family? God hath given you a new name, he hath written your name in the book of life: behold your spiritual heraldry: here is a name that cannot be cut off.

2. Hath God taken away thy only child? He hath given thee his only Son: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? he is his Father’s brightness, Heb. i. 3. His riches, Col. ii. 9. His delight, Ps. xlii. 1. Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? And is there not enough in him to ravish us with holy delight? He is wisdom to teach us, righteousness to acquit us, sanctification to adorn us: he is that royal and princely gift; he is the bread of angels, the joy and triumph of saints; he is all in all, Col. iii. 10. Why then art thou discontented? Though thy child be lost, yet thou hast him for whom all things are lost.

*7th and last Reply,* Let us blush to think that nature should outstrip grace. Pulvillus, an heathen, when he was about to consecrate a temple to Jupiter, and news was brought him of the death of his son, would not desist from his enterprize, but, with much composure of mind, gave order for decent burial.

§ 2. *The second apology answered.*

2. Apology that discontent makes, is, I have a great part of my estate strangely melted away, and trading begins to fail.

God is pleased sometimes to bring his children very low, and cut them short in their estate: it fares with them as with that widow who had nothing in her house, save a pot of oil, 2 Kings iv. 2. But be content.

*Reply 1.* God hath taken away your estate, but not your portion. This is a sacred paradox, honour and estate are no part of a Christian’s jointure; they are rather accessaries than essentials; and are extrinsical and foreign; therefore the loss of those cannot denominate a man miserable; still the portion remains; ‘the Lord is my portion, saith my soul,’ Lam. iii. 24. Suppose one were worth a million of money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his sleeve, this is no part of his estate, nor can we say he is undone: the loss of sublunary comforts is not so much to a Christian’s portion, as the loss of a pin is to a million. ‘These things shall be added to you,’ Mat. iv. 22. *Adjiciuntur*, they shall be cast in as overplus. When a man buys a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given into the measure: now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone: for still the whole piece remains; our outward estate is not so much in regard of the portion, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece;

why then should a Christian be discontented, when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? A thief may take away all the money that I have about me, but not my land; still a Christian hath a title to the land of promise. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.

*Reply 2.* Perhaps, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost: outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God cannot bestow a jewel upon us, but we fall so in love with it, that we forget him who gave it. What pity is it that we should commit idolatry with the creature! God is forced sometimes to drain away an estate; the plate and jewels are often cast over-board to save the passenger. Many a man may curse the time that ever he had such an estate, it hath been an enchantment to draw away his heart from God. 'Some there are that will be rich,' 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'And they fall into a snare.' Art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare? Riches are thorns, Matt. xiii. 7. Art thou angry because God hath pulled away a thorn from thee? Riches are compared to thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. Perhaps thy affections, which are the feet of the soul, might have stuck so fast in this golden clay, that they could not have ascended up to heaven. Be content; if God dam up our outward comforts, it is, that the stream of our love may run faster another way.

*Reply 3.* If your estate be small, yet God can bless a little. It is not how much money we have, but how much blessing. He that often curseth the bags of gold can bless the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse. What if thou hast not the full flesh-pots? Yet thou hast a promise, 'I will bless her provision,' Psal. cxxiii. 15. And then a little goes a great way; be content, thou hast the dew of a blessing distilled; a dinner of green herbs, where love is, is sweet: I may add, where the love of God is. Another may have more estate than you, but, more care: more riches, less rest; more revenues, but, with all, more occasions of expence: he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him power to eat thereof, Eccl. vi. 9. He hath the dominion of his estate, not the use; he holds more but enjoys less; in a word, thou hast less gold than he, perhaps less guilt.

*Reply 4.* You did never so thrive in your spiritual trade; your heart was never so low, as since your condition was low: you were never so poor in spirit, never so rich in faith. You did never run the ways of God's commandments so fast as since some of your golden weights were taken off. You never had such trading for heaven all your life; this is *uberrimus questus*. You did never make such adventures upon the promise as since you left off your sea-adventures. This is the best kind of merchandize: O Christian, thou never had such incomes of the

Spirit, such spring-tides of joy ; and what though weak in estate, if strong in assurance ? Be content, what you have lost one way, you have gained another.

*Reply 5.* Be your losses what they will in this kind, remember in every loss there is only a suffering, but in every discontent there is a sin, and one sin is worse than a thousand sufferings. What ! Because some of my revenues are gone, shall I part with some of my righteousness ? Shall my faith and patience go too ? Because I do not possess an estate, shall I not therefore possess my own spirit ? O learn to be content.

§ 3. *The third apology answered.*

The third apology is, it is sad with me in my relations ; where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief. This apology or objection brancheth itself into two particulars, whereto I shall give a distinct reply.

*1st Branch.* My child goes on in rebellion ; I fear I have brought forth a child for the devil. It is, indeed, sad to think, that hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our children, and certainly the pangs of grief which the mother hath in this kind, are worse than her pangs of travail ; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented ; for, consider,

*1st Reply.* You may pick something out of your child's undutifulness ; the child's sin is sometimes the parent's sermon ; the undutifulness of children to us, may be a *memento* to put us in mind of your undutifulness once to God. Time was when we were rebellious children ; how long did our hearts stand out as garrisons against God ? How long did he parley with us, and beseech us, ere we would yield ? He walked in the tenderness of his heart toward us, but we walked in the forwardness of our hearts towards him ; and since grace hath been planted in our souls, how much of the wild olive is still in us ? How many motions of the Spirit do we daily resist ? How many unkindnesses and affronts have we put upon Christ ? Let this open a spring of repentance ; look upon your child's rebellions and mourn for your own rebellion.

*2d Reply.* Though to see him undutiful is your grief, yet not always your sin. Hath a parent given the child, not only the milk of the breast, but the sincere milk of the word ? 1 Pet. ii. 2. Hast thou seasoned his tender years with religious education ? Thou canst do no more ; parents can only work knowledge, God must work grace : they can only lay the wood together ; it is God must make it burn : a parent can only be a guide to shew his child the way to heaven : the Spirit of God must be a loadstone to draw his heart into that way.— ‘ Am I in God's stead (saith Jacob) who hath with-held the fruit of the womb ?’ Gen. xxx. 2. Can I give children ? So, is a parent in God's stead to give grace ? Who can help it, if a child having the

light of conscience, scripture, education, these three torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy child, pray for him; but do not sin for him by discontent.

*Reply 3.* Say not, you have brought forth a child for the devil; God can reduce him; he hath promised to 'turn the heart of the children to their parents,' Mal. iv. 6. and to 'open springs of grace in the desert,' Isaiah xxxv. 6. When thy child is going full sail to the devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his Spirit, and alter his course. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the saints, and was sailing hell-ward, God turns him another way; before, he was going to Damascus, God sends him to Ananias; before, a persecutor, now a preacher. Though our children are for the present fallen into the devil's pond, God can turn them from the power of Satan, Acts xxiv. 16. and bring them in the twelfth hour. Monica was weeping for her son Augustine; at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the church of God.

2. The second branch of the objection is, but my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.

*Ans.* It is sad to have the living and the dead tied together: yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourn for his sins, but do not murmur: for,

*Reply 1.* God hath placed you in your relation, and you cannot be discontented, but you quarrel with God. What! For every cross that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? Oh the blasphemy of our hearts!

*Reply 2.* God can make you a gainer by your husband's sin: perhaps you had never been so good, if he not been so bad. The fire burns hottest in the coldest climate: God often by a divine *antiperistasis* turns the sins of others to our good, and makes our maladies our medicines. The more profane the husband is, oft the more holy the wife grows: the more earthly he is, the more heavenly she grows: God makes sometimes the husband's sin a spur to the wife's grace. His exorbitancies are as a pair of bellows to blow up the flame of her zeal and devotion the more.

Is it not thus? Doth not thy husband's wickedness send thee to prayer? Thou perhaps hadst never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much. His deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The apostle saith, 'the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband,' 1 Cor. vii. 14. But in this sense, the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband, she grows better; his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a medicine for her security.

§ 4. *The fourth apology answered.*

The next apology that discontent makes is, but my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.

*Ans.* It is sad, when a friend proves like a brook in summer, Job vi. 15. The traveller being parched with heat, comes to the brook, hoping to refresh himself; but the brook is dried up: yet be content.

*Reply 1.* Thou art not alone, others of the saints have been betrayed by friends: and when they have leaned upon them, they have been as a foot out of joint. This was true in the type of David, Ps. lv. 12, 13. 'It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, O man, my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together;' and in the antitype Christ, he was betrayed by a friend; and why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt out to us as Jesus Christ had? 'The servant is not above his master.'

*Reply 2.* A Christian may often read his sin in his punishment; hath not he dealt treacherously with God? How oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vows, and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? How oft hath he abused love, taken the jewels of God's mercies, and making a golden calf of them, serving his own lusts? How oft hath he made the free grace of God, which should have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? These wounds hath the Lord received in the house of his friends, Zech. xiii. 6. Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God; shall a Christian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himself?

*Reply 3.* Hath thy friend proved treacherous? Perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon a house than the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, 'trust ye not in a friend,' Mic. vii. 5. Perhaps you did put more trust in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are at Venice-glasses; we may use them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break; behold matter of humility, but not of fullness and discontent.

*Reply 4.* You have a friend in heaven who will never fail you; 'there is a friend (saith Solomon) that sticketh closer than a brother?' Prov. xviii. 24. Such a friend is God; he is very studious and inquisitive in our behalf; he hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting, how he may do us good; he is the best friend which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends.

Consider, 1. He is a loving friend. 'God is love,' 1 John iv. 16. Hence he is said sometimes to engrave us on the 'palm of his hand,' Isa. xlix. 16. That we may never be out of his eye, and to carry 'us in his bosom,' Isa. xl. 11. Near to his heart. There is no stop or stint in his love; but as the river

Nilus, it overflows all the banks : his love is as far beyond our thoughts, as it is above our deserts. O the infinite love of God ; in giving the Son of his love to be made flesh, which was more than if all the angels had been made worms ? God in giving Christ to us gave his very heart to us ; here is love penciled out in all its glory, and engraven as with the ‘ point of a diamond.’ All other love is hatred in comparison of the love of our friend.

2. He is a careful friend ; ‘ he careth for you,’ 1 Pet. v. 7. (1.) He minds and transacts our business as his own, he accounts his people’s interests and concerns as his interest. (2.) He provides for us grace to enrich us, glory to ennoble us : it was David’s complaint, ‘ no man careth for my soul,’ Psal. cxlii. 4. A Christian hath a friend that cares for him.

3. He is a prudent friend, Dan. ii. 20. A friend may sometimes err through ignorance or mistake, and give his friend poison instead of sugar ; but ‘ God is wise in heart,’ Job ix. 4. He is skilful as well as faithful : he knows what our disease is, and what physic is most proper to apply ; he knows what will do us good, and what wind will be best to carry us to heaven.

4. He is a faithful friend, Deut. vii. 9, 10. And he is faithful, 1. In his promises, ‘ in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie hath promised,’ Tit. i. 2. God’s people are ‘ children that will not lie,’ Isa. lxiii. 8. But God is a God that cannot lie : he will not deceive the faith of his people ; nay, he cannot : he is called the truth ; he can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. The Lord may sometimes change his promise (as when he converts a temporal promise into a spiritual) but he can never break his promise.

5. He is a compassionate friend, hence in scripture we read of the ‘ yearnings of his bowels,’ Jer. xxxi. 20. God’s friendship is nothing else but compassion ; for there is naturally no affection in us to desire his friendship, nor no goodness in us to deserve it ; the loadstone is in himself. When we were full of blood, he was full of bowels ; when we were enemies, he sent an ambassage of peace ; when our hearts were turned back from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderness and sympathy of our friend in heaven ! We ourselves have some relentings of heart to those which are in misery ; but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is called, ‘ the Father of mercies,’ 2 Cor. i. 3.

6. He is a constant friend. His compassions fail not, Lam. iii. 22. Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves in autumn. *Amici circa fartaginem*, as Plutarch saith ; these are rather flatterers than friends. Joab was for a time faithful to king David’s house, he went not after Absalom’s treason ; but within a while proved false to the crown, and went after the treason of Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 7. God is a friend for ever,

‘ having loved his own, he loved them to the end,’ John xiii. 1. What though I am despised ; yet God loves me : what though my friends cast me off ? yet God loves me ; he loves to the end, and there is no end of that love.

This, methinks, in case of discourtesies and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

§ 5. *The fifth apology answered.*

The next apology is, I am under great reproaches. Let not this discontent : For,

*Ans.* 1. It is a sign there is some good in thee ; saith Socrates, What evil have I done, that this bad man commends me ? The applause of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their censure imports some good, Psal. xxxviii. 20. David wept and fasted, and that was turned to his reproach, Psal. lxxix. 10. As we must pass to heaven through the pikes of suffering, so through the clouds of reproach.

*Reply* 2. If your reproach be for God, as David’s was, ‘ for thy sake I have borne reproach,’ Psal. lxxix. 7. then it is rather matter of triumph, than dejection : Christ doth not say, when you are reproached, be discontented ; but rejoice, Mat. v. 12. Wear your reproach as a diadem of honour, for now a spirit of ‘ glory rests upon you,’ 1 Pet. iv. 14. Put your reproaches into the inventory of your riches ; so did Moses, Heb. xi. 26. It should be a Christian’s ambition to wear his Saviour’s livery, though it be sprinkled with blood and sullied with disgrace.

*Reply* 3. God will do us good by reproach, as David of Shimei’s cursing, ‘ it may be the Lord will requite good for his cursing this day,’ 2 Sam. xvi. 12. This puts us upon searching out sin. A child of God labours to read his sin in every stone of reproach that is cast at him ; besides, now we have an opportunity to exercise patience and humility.

*Reply* 4. Jesus Christ was content to be reproached for us ; ‘ he despised the shame of the cross,’ Heb. xi. 2. It may amaze us to think, that he who was God could endure to be spit upon, to be crowned with thorns, in a kind of jeer ; and when he was ready to bow his head upon the cross, to have the Jews in scorn wag their heads, and say, ‘ he saved others, himself he cannot save.’ The shame of the cross was as much as the blood of the cross ; his name was crucified before his body. The sharp arrows of reproach that the world did shoot at Christ, went deeper into his heart than the spear ; his sufferings was so ignominious, that, as if the sun did blush to behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and masked itself with a cloud ; (and well it might when the Sun of righteousness was in an eclipse) ; all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory endure, or rather despise for us. Oh then, let us be content to have our names eclipsed for Christ ; let not reproach lie at our heart, but



let us bind it as a crown about our head. 'Alas ! what is reproach ; This is but small shot ; how will men stand in the mouth of a cannon ? Those who are discontented at a reproach, will be offended at a faggot.

*Reply 5.* Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust ? And shall not we for maintaining the truth ? Some 'glory in that which is their shame,' Phil. iii. 19. And shall we be ashamed of that which is our glory ? Be not troubled at these petty things ; he whose heart is once touched with the loadstone of God's Spirit, doth account it his honour to be dishonoured for Christ, Acts xv. 4. and doth as much despise the world's censure, as he doth their praise.

*Reply 6.* We live in an age, wherein men dare reproach God himself. The Divinity of the Son of God is blasphemously reproached by the Socinian ; the blessed Bible is reproached by the antiscripturist, as if it were but a legend of lies, and every man's faith a fable ; the justice of God is called to the bar of reason by the Arminians ; the wisdom of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the Atheist ; the ordinances of God are decreed by the Familists, as being too heavy a burden for a free-born conscience, and too low and carnal for a sublime seraphic spirit ; the ways of God, which have the majesty of holiness shining in them, are calumniated by the profane ; the mouths of men are open against God, as if he were an hard master, and the path of religion too strict and severe. If men cannot give God a good word, shall we be discontented or troubled, that they speak hardly of us ? Such as labour to bury the glory of religion, shall we wonder that their throats are open sepulchres, Rom. iii. 31. to bury our good name ? Oh, let us be contented, while we are in God's scouring-house, to have our names sullied a little ; the blacker we seem to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the celestial throne.

§ 6. *The sixth apology answered.*

The sixth apology that discontent makes, is, disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and graces. And doth this trouble ? Consider,

*Reply 1.* The world is an unequal judge ; as it is full of change, so of partiality. The world gives her respects, as she doth her places of preferment ; more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee ? That is best worth that is in him that hath it ; honour is in him that gives it : better deserve respect, and not have it, than have it, and not deserve it.

*Reply 2.* Hast thou grace ; God respects thee, and his judgment is best worth prizing. A believer is a person of honour, being born of God. Since thou wast precious in mine eyes, 'thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee,' Isa. xliii.

4. Let the world think what they will of you ; perhaps in their eyes you are a cast-away ; in God's eyes a dove, Cant. ii. 14. A spouse, Cant. v. 1. A jewel, Mal. iii. 17. Others account you the dregs and off-scouring of the world, 1 Cor. iv. 14. but God will give ' whole kingdoms for your ransom,' Isa. xliii. 5. Let this content : no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if I am *rectus in curia*, God thinks well of me. It is better that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their rubric, and God puts us in his black book. What is a man the better that his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his judge condemn him ? O labour to keep in with God, prize his love : Let my fellow-subjects frown : I am contented, being a favourite of the King of heaven.

*Reply 3.* If we are the child of God, we must look for disrespect ; a believer is in the world, but not of the world : we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world ; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own country, Heb. xiii. 14. It is dangerous to be the world's favourite.

*Reply 4.* Discontent arising from disrespect, favours too much of pride : an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out, as Agur, ' I am more brutish than any man,' Prov. xxx. 2. And therefore is contented, though he be set among ' dogs of the flock,' Job xxx. 2. Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful that he is not laid ' in the lowest hell,' Ps. lxxxvi. 13. A proud man sets an high value upon himself ; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price. Take heed of pride : O had others a window to look into their breast, (as Crates once expressed it) or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldest wonder to have so much respect.

§ 7. *The seventh apology answered.*

The next apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth. Consider,

*Reply 1.* Your sufferings are not so great as your sins : put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest ; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins ; he looks upon one at the great end of the perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the perspective. The carnal heart cries out, take away the frogs ; but a gracious heart cries out, take away the iniquity, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. The one saith, never any one suffered as I have done : but the other saith, never one sinned as I have done, Micah vii. 7.

*Reply 2.* Art thou under sufferings; thou hast an opportunity to shew the valour and constancy of thy mind. Some of God's saints would have accounted it a great favour to have been honoured with martyrdom. One said, 'I am in prison till I be in prison.' Thou countest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an ensign of their glory.

*Reply 3.* Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shewn much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. Curtius, being bravely mounted, and in armour, threw himself into a great gulf, that the city of Rome might, according to the oracle, be delivered from the pestilence. And we having a divine oracle, 'that they who kill the body cannot hurt the soul,' shall we not with much constancy and patience devote ourselves to injuries for religion, and rather suffer for the truth, than the truth suffer for us? The Decii among the Romans vowed themselves to death, that their legions and soldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what should we be content to suffer, to make the truth victorious! Regulus having sworn that he would return to Carthage, (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his oath, he did adventure to go: we then who are Christians, having made a vow to Christ in baptism, and so often renewed in the blessed sacrament, should with much contentment rather choose to suffer, than violate our sacred oath. Thus the blessed martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their souls to God? And when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the body, let them not the mind, through discontent; shew by your heroic courage, that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

§ 8. *The eighth apology answered.*

The next apology is, the prosperity of the wicked.

*Ans.* I confess it is so often, that the evil enjoy all the good, and the good endure all the evil. David though a good man stumbled at this, and had like to have fallen, Ps. lxxiii. 2. Well, be contented; for remember,

1. These are not the only things, nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale: these are but acorns with which God feeds swine; you who are believers have more choice fruit, the olive, the pomegranate, the fruit which grows on the true vine Jesus Christ; others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of heaven; they have a south land, you have those springs of living water which are clarified with Christ's blood, and indulcerated with his love.

*Reply 2.* To see the wicked flourish is matter rather of pity than envy: it is all the heaven they must have. 'Woe to you,

rich men, for you have received your consolation,' Luke vi. 24. Hence it was that David made it his solemn prayer, ' Deliver me from the wicked, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure,' Ps. xvii. 15. The words (methinks) are David's litany; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, " good God deliver me." When the wicked, have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The world is first musical and then tragical: if you would have a man fry and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the fat of the earth. O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out of the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial. Therefore as that soldier said to his fellow, do you envy my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them: so I say, do you envy the wicked. Alas, their prosperity is like Haman's banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the gallows through pleasant fields and fine galleries, or to see him go up the ladder in clothes of gold? The wicked may flourish in their bravery a while; but, when they flourish as the grass, it is, that they shall be destroyed for ever, Ps. xcii. 7. The proud grass shall be mown down. Whatever a sinner enjoys, he hath a curse with it, Mal. ii. 2. and shall we envy? What if poisoned bread be given the dogs? The long furrows in the backs of the godly have a seed of blessing in them, when the table of the wicked becomes a snare, and their honour their halter.

§ 9. *The ninth apology answered.*

9. The next apology that discontent makes for itself, is, the evils of the times. The times are full of heresy and impiety, and this is that which troubles me. This apology consists of two branches, to which I shall answer *in specie*; and,

*Branch 1.* The times are full of heresy—This is indeed sad; when the devil cannot by violence destroy the church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with Samson's fox-tails set the corn on fire, then he sows tares; as he labours to destroy the peace of the church by division, so the truth of it by error: we may cry out with Seneca, *vere vivimus in temporum seculibus*, we live in times wherein there is sluice open to all novel opinions, and every man's opinion is his Bible. Well; this may make us mourn, but let us not murmur through discontent: Consider,

*Reply 1.* Error makes a discovery of men. 1. Bad men; error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the leprosy brake forth in the forehead, then was the leper discovered. Error is a spiritual bastard; the devil is the father, and pride the mother: you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man. Now, it is good that such men should be laid

open, to the intent, *First*, That God's righteous judgment upon them may be adored, 2 Theff. ii. 12. *Secondly*, That others, who are free, be not infected. If a man have the plague, it is well it breaks forth : for my part, I would avoid an heretic, as I would avoid the devil, for he is sent on his errand. I appeal unto you, if there were a tavern in this city, where, under pretence of selling wine, many hogsheds of poison were to be sold, were it not well that others should know of it, that they might not buy ? It is good that those who have poisoned opinions should be known, that the people of God may not come near either the scent or taste of that poison.

2. Error is a touch-stone to discover good men ; it tries the gold. ' There must be heresies, that they which are approved, may be made manifest,' 1 Cor. xi. 14. Thus our love to Christ, and zeal for truth doth appear. God shews who are the living fish, viz. such as swim against the stream ; who are the sound sheep, viz. such as feed in the green pastures of the ordinances ; who are the doves, viz. such as live in the best air, where the spirit breathes ; God sets a garland of honour upon these. ' These are they which came out of great tribulation,' Rev. vii. 14. So these are they that have opposed the errors of the times ; these are they that have preserved the virginity of their conscience, who have kept their judgment sound, and their heart soft. God will have a trophy of honour set upon some of his saints ; they shall be renowned for their sincerity, being like the cypress, which keeps its greenness and freshness in the winter-season.

*Reply 2.* Be not sinfully discontented, for God can make the errors of the church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed ; as it is in the law, one man laying a false title to a piece of land, the true title hath by this means been the more searched into and ratified ; some had never so studied to defend the truth of scripture, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by sophistry ; all the mists and fogs of error that have risen out of the bottomless pit, have made the glorious sun of truth to shine so much the brighter. Had not Arius and Sabellius broached their damnable errors, the truth of those questions about the blessed Trinity, had never been so discussed and defended by Athanasius, Augustine, and others ; had not the devil brought in so much of his princely darkness, the champions for truth had never run so fast to scripture to light their lamps. So that God, with a wheel within a wheel, over-rules these things wisely, and turns them to the best. Truth is an heavenly plant, that settles by shaking.

*Reply 3.* God raiseth the price of his truth the more ; the very threds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is

much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true gold the more ; pure wine of truth is never more precious, than when unfound doctrines are broached and vented.

*Reply 4.* Error makes us more thankful to God for the jewel of truth. When you see another infected with the plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection ? When we see others have the leprosy in the head, how thankful are we to God that he hath not given us over to believe a lie, and so be damned ? It is a good use that may be made even of the errors of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poison.

2. The second branch of the apology that discontent makes, is, the impiety of the times. I live and converse among the profane ; ‘ O that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest,’ Ps. lv. 6.

*Ans.* It is indeed sad, to be mixed with the wicked. David beheld ‘ transgressors and was grieved,’ Ps. cxix. 58. and Lot (who was a bright star in a dark night) was vexed, or, as the word in the original may bear, ‘ wearied out with the unclean conversation of the wicked,’ 2 Pet. ii. 7. He made the sins of Sodom spears to pierce his own soul ; we ought, if there be any spark of divine love in us, to be very sensible of the sins of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them ; yet let us not break forth into mourning or discontent, knowing that God, in his providence, hath permitted it, and surely not without some reason ; for,

*Reply 1.* The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly ; the wise God often makes those who are wicked and peaceable, a means to save-guard his people from those who are wicked and cruel. The king of Babylon kept Jeremiah, and gave special order for his looking to, that he did want nothing, Jeremiah xxxix. 11, 12. God sometimes makes brazen sinners to be brazen walls to defend his people.

*Reply 2.* God doth interline and mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to save the wicked ; such is the beauty of holiness, that it hath a magnetical force in it to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes God makes a believing husband a means to convert an unbelieving wife, and *e contra*.—‘ What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband ? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife ?’ 1 Cor. vii. 16. The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice and pious example, have won them to the embracing of religion ; if there were not some godly among the wicked, how, in a probable way, without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked should be converted ? Those who are now shining saints in heaven, sometimes served vers lusts, Tim. iii. 3. Paul, once a persecutor ; Augustine,

once a manichee: Luther, once a monk; but by the severe and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the faith.

§ 10. *The tenth apology answered.*

The next apology that discontent makes, is, lowness of parts and gifts; I cannot (saith the Christian) discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy, as others.

*Reply 2.* Grace is beyond gifts; thou comparest thy grace with another's gifts, there is a vast difference; grace without gifts is infinitely better than gifts without grace; In religion, the vitals are best; gifts are a more extrinsecal and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more distinguishing work, and is a jewel hung only upon the elect. Hast thou the seed of God, the holy anointing? Be content.

1. Thou sayest, Thou canst not discourse with that fluency as others.

*Ans.* Experiments in religion are beyond notions, and impressions beyond expressions. Judas, no doubt, could make a learned discourse of Christ, but well fared the woman in the gospel, that felt virtue coming out of him, Luke viii. 47. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and graces, as between a tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the garden.

2. Thou sayest, Thou canst not pray with that elegancy as others.

*Ans.* Prayer is a matter more of the heart than the head: in prayer it is not so much fluency prevails, as fervency, James v. 16. nor is God so much taken with the elegancy of speech, as the efficacy of the spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the mouth is the orator; sighs and groans are the best rhetoric.

*Reply 2.* Be not discontented; for God doth usually proportion a man's parts to the place where he calls them: some are set in an higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferior member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

§ 11. *The eleventh apology answered?*

The next apology is, the troubles of the church. Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for myself, as the public? The church of God suffers.

*Ans.* I confess it is sad, and we ought for this, 'to hang our harps upon the willows,' Psal. cxxxvii. He is a wooden leg in Christ's body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must not be proud flesh, so neither dead flesh. When the church of God suffers, he must sympathize; 'Jeremiah wept for the virgin daughter of Sion.' We must feel our

brethren's hard cords through our soft beds : In music, if one string be touched, all the rest sound ; when God strikes upon our brethren, ' our bowels must sound as an harp,' Isa. xvi. 11. be sensible, but give not way to discontent. For, consider, - *Reply 1.* God sits at the stern of his church, Ps. xlv. 5. Sometimes it is a ship tossed upon the waves, ' O thou afflicted and tossed,' Isa. liv. 12. But cannot God bring this ship to haven, though it meet with a storm upon the sea ? This ship in the gospel was tossed, because sin was in it ; but it was not overwhelmed, because Christ was in it. Christ is in the ship of his church, fear not sinking ; the church's anchor is cast in heaven. Do not we think God loves his church, and takes as much care of it as we can ? The names of the twelve tribes were on Aaron's breast, signifying how near to God's heart his people are ; they are his portion, Deut. xxxviii. 9. and shall that be lost ; his glory, Isa. xlv. 13. and shall that be finally eclipsed ? No certainly. God can deliver his church, not only from, but by opposition ; the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.

*Reply 2.* God hath always propagated religion by sufferings. The foundation of the church hath been laid in blood ; and these sanguine showers have ever made it more fruitful. Cain put the knife to Abel's throat, and ever since the church's veins have bled : but she is like the vine, which by bleeding grows ; and like the palm-tree, which may have this motto, *percutsa resurgit* ; the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth. The holiness and patience of the saints, under their persecutions, hath much added both to the growth of religion, and the crown. Basil and Tertullian observe of the primitive martyrs, that divers of the heathens seeing their zeal and constancy, turned Christians. Religion is that Phoenix which hath always revived and flourished in the ashes of holy men. Isaiah sawn asunder, Peter crucified at Jerusalem with his head downwards ; Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, Polycarp, of Smyrna, both martyred for religion ; yet evermore the truth had been sealed by blood, and gloriously dispersed ; whereupon Julian did forbear to persecute, *non ex clementia sed invidia* ; not out of pity, but envy ; because the church grew so fast, and multiplied, as Nazianzen well observes.

#### § 12. *The twelfth apology answered.*

The twelfth apology that discontent makes for itself, is this, It is not my trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent me.

*Ans.* Be sure it be so ; do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul : In true mourning for sin, when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed : but suppose the apology be real, that sin is the ground of your discontent ; yet I



answer, a man's disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds, in these three cases.

1. When it is disheartening, that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If Israel had only pored upon their sting, and not looked up to the brazen serpent, they had never been healed. That sorrow for sin which drives us away from God, is not without sin, for there is more despair in it than remorse; the soul hath so many tears in its eyes, that it cannot see Christ. Sorrow, as sorrow; doth not save (that were to make a Christ of our tears) but it is useful, as it is preparatory in the soul, making sin vile, and Christ precious. Oh look up to the brazen serpent, the Lord Jesus; a sight of his blood will revive, the medicine of his merits is broader than our sore.

It is Satan's policy, either to keep us from seeing our sins, or, if we will needs see them, that we may be swallowed up of sorrow, 2 Cor. ii. 7. either he would stupify us, or affright us; either keep the glass of the law from our eyes, or else pencil out our sins in such crimson colours, that we may sink in the quicksands of despair.

2. When sorrow is indisposing, it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul. This is not sorrow, but rather fullness, and doth render a man not so much penitential as cynical.

3. When it is out of season; God bids us rejoice, and we hang our harps upon the willows; he bids us trust, and we cast ourselves down, and are brought even to the margin of despair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be sure to put us upon it when it is least in season.

When God calls us in a special manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white robes, and Satan will be putting us into mourning, and instead of a garment of praise, clothe us with a spirit of heaviness; so God loseth the acknowledgement of mercy, and we the comfort.

If thy sorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Christ, if it hath raised in thee high prizings of him, strong hungerings after him, sweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Christian doth but sin to vex and torture himself further upon the rack of his own discontent.

And thus I hope I have answered the most material objections and apologies which this sin of discontent doth make for itself. I see no reason why a Christian should be discontented, unless for his discontent. Let me in the next place propound something which may be both as a loadstone and a whetstone to contentation.

#### CHAP. XI. *Divine motives to contentment.*

And so I proceed to the arguments or motives that may quicken to contentment.

§ 1. *The first argument to contentation.*

I. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden ; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent if I would prescribe a receipt or antidote against poverty : but behold, here is that which is more excellent ; for a man to want, and yet have enough, this alone contentment of spirit doth bring. Contentation is a remedy against all our troubles, a levamen to all our burdens, it is the cure of care. Contentation though it be not properly a grace, (it is rather a disposition of mind) yet in it there is a happy temperature and mixture of all the graces : it is a most precious compound, which is made up of faith, patience, meekness, humility, &c. which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in specie these seven rare excellencies in contentment.

1. Excellency, a contented Christian carries heaven about him : for, what is heaven, but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God ? In contentment there is the first fruits of heaven. There are two things in a contented spirit, which make it like heaven. (1.) God is there ; something of God is to be seen in that heart. A discontented Christian is like a rough tempestuous sea ; when the water is rough, you can see nothing there ; but when it is smooth and serene, then you may behold your face in the water, Prov. xvii. 19. When the heart rageth through discontent, it is like a rough sea, you can see nothing there, unless passion and murmuring ; there is nothing of God, nothing of heaven in that heart : but by virtue of contentment, it is like the sea when it is smooth and calm, there is a face shining there ; you may see something of Christ in that heart, a representation of all the graces. (2.) Rest is there ! O what a sabbath is kept in a contented heart ! What an heaven ! A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark ; though the ark were tossed with waves, Noah could sit and sing in the ark. The soul that is gotten into the ark of contentment, sits quiet, and sails above all the waves of trouble ; he can sing in this spiritual ark : the wheels of the chariot move. but the axle-tree stirs not ; the circumference of the heavens is carried about the earth, but the earth moves not out of its centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented spirit is not stirred or moved out of its centre. The sails of a mill, move with the wind, but the mill itself stands still ; an emblem of contentment : when our outward estate moves with the wind of providence, yet the heart is settled through holy contentment ; and when others are like quick-silver, shaking and trembling through disquiet, the contented spirit can say, as David, “ O God, my heart is fixed,” Psal. lvii. 7. What is this but a piece of heaven ?

2. Excellency, whatever is defective in the creature; is made up in contentment. A Christian may want the comforts that others have, the land and possessions; but God hath distilled into his heart that contentment which is far better: in this sense, that is true of our Saviour, 'he shall have in this life an hundred fold,' Mat. xix. 29. Perhaps he that ventured all for Christ, never hath his house or land again: ay, but God gives him a contented spirit; and this breeds such joy in the soul, as is infinitely sweeter than all his houses and lands which he left for Christ. It was sad with David in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven (as some think) from his kingdom; yet, in regard of that sweet contentment he found in God, he had more comfort than men use to have in the time of 'harvest and vintage,' Ps. iv. 7. One man hath house and lands to live upon, another hath nothing, only a small trade; yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Christian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment; and so he knows as well how to want, as to abound. O the rare art, or rather miracle of contentment! wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented Christian is well in the want of all things.

*Qu. But how comes a Christian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts?*

*Ans.* A Christian finds contentment distilled out of the breasts of the promises. He is poor in purse but rich in promise. There is one promise brings much contentment into the soul—'They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing,' Psal. xxxiv. 10. If the thing we desire be good for us, we shall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it, is good for us. The resting satisfied with the promise gives contentment.

3. Excellency, contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oils the wheels of the soul, and makes it more agile and nimble; it composeth the heart, and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a passion of grief, or discontent, 'serve God without distraction?' 1 Cor. vii. 35. Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. First you prepare the viol, and wind up the strings, ere you play a fit of music: when a Christian's heart is wound up to this heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A discontented Christian is like Saul, when the evil spirit came upon him: O what jarrings and discords doth he make in prayer! When an army is put into disorder, then it is not fit for battle; when the thoughts are scattered and distracted about the cares of this life, a man is not fit for devotion. Discontent takes the heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the present trouble, so that a man's mind is not upon his prayer, but upon his cross.

Discontent doth di-joint the soul, and it is impossible now

that a Christian should go so steadily and cheerfully in God's service; O how lame is his devotion! The discontented person gives God but a half-duty, and his religion is nothing but bodily exercise, it wants a soul to animate it. David would not offer that to God which 'cost him nothing,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Where there is too much worldly care, there is too little spiritual cost in a duty. The discontented person doth his duties by halves; he is just like 'Ephraim, a cake not turned,' Hos. vii. 8. He is a cake baked on one side, he gives God the outside, but not the spiritual part; his heart is not in duty, he is baked on one side, but the other side dough; and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what can he expect more than the shell of comfort; Contentation brings the heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and spirits of a duty, when the soul is composed: now a Christian doth *rem agere*, his heart is intent and serious. There are some duties which we cannot perform as we ought without contentment; as, (1.) To rejoice in God. How can he rejoice that is discontented? He is fitter for repining than rejoicing. (2.) To be thankful for mercy. Can a discontented person be thankful? He can be fretful, not thankful. (3.) To justify God in his proceedings, Ezra ix. 23. How can he do this who is discontented with his condition? He will sooner censure God's wisdom, than clear his justice. Oh then, how excellent is contentation, which doth prepare, and as it were, firing the heart for duty? Indeed contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agile, but acceptable. It is this that puts beauty and worth into them; for contentment settles the soul; now, as it is with milk, when it is always stirring, you can make nothing of it, but let it settle a while, and then it turns to cream: when the heart is over-much stirred with disquiet and discontent, you can make nothing of those duties: how thin, how fleeting and jejune are they? But when the heart is once settled by holy contentment, now there is some worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. Excellency, Contentment is the spiritual arch, or pillar of the soul; it fits a man to bear burdens; he whose heart is ready to sink under the least sin, by virtue of this hath a spirit invincible under sufferings. A contented Christian is like the camomile, the more it is trodden upon, the more it grows; as physic works diseases out of the body, so doth contentment work trouble out of the heart. Thus it argues, if I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; if I am in want, God can relieve me. 'Ye shall not see wind nor rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water,' 2 Kings iii. 17. Thus holy contentment keeps the heart from fainting; in the autumn, when the fruit and leaves are blown off, still there is sap in the root: when there is an autumn upon

our external felicity, the leaves of our estate drop off, still there is the sap of contentment in the heart; and a Christian hath life inwardly, when his outward comforts do not blossom. The contented heart is never out of heart. Contentation is a golden shield, that doth beat back discouragements. Humility is like the lead to the net, which keeps the soul down when it is rising through passion: and contentment is like the cork, which keeps the soul up when the heart is sinking through discouragements. Contentment is the great underprop: it is like the beam which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a rock that breaks the waves.

It is strange to observe the same affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themselves under it. The contented Christian is like Sampson, that carried away the gates of the city upon his back, Judg. xvi. 3. he can go away with his cross cheerfully and makes nothing of it; the other is like Issachar, conching down under his burden, Gen. xlix. 14. The reason is, the one is content, and that breeds courage; the other discontented, and that breeds fainting. Discontent swells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this sacred sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go limping under our afflictions, we know not what burdens God may exercise us with; let us therefore preserve contentment: as is our contentment, such will be our courage. David with his five stones and his sling defied Goliath, and overcame him. Get but contentment into the sling of your heart; and with this sacred stone you may both defy the world and conquer it; you may break those afflictions, which else would break you.

5. Excellency is, contentment prevents many sins and temptations.

*First*, It prevents many sins. Where there wants contentment there wants no sin; discontentedness with our condition, is a sin that doth not go alone, but is like the first link of the chain, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, these are two sins which contentation prevents. (1.) Impatience. Discontent and impatience are two twins: 'this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?' 2 Kings vi. 33. As if God were so tied, that he must give us the mercy just when we desire it. Impatience is no small sin; as will appear, if you consider whence it ariseth: as, (1.) It is for want of faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent grace; it believes that God's wisdom tempers, and his love sweetens all ingredients; this works patience: 'Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?' Impatience is the daughter of infidelity. If a patient have an ill opinion of the physician, and conceits that he comes to poison him, he will have none of his receipts. When we have a prejudice against

God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we storm and cry out like a foolish man (it is Chrysostom's simile) that cries out, away with the plaister, though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaister smart a little, than the wound fester and rankle? (2.) Impatience is for want of love to God. We will bear his reproofs whom we love, not only patiently, but thankfully, 'Love thinks no evil,' 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It puts the fairest and most candid gloss upon the actions of a friend, 'Love covers evil.' If it were possible for God in the least manner to err (which were blasphemy to think) love would cover that error; love takes every thing in the best sense, it makes us bear any stroke; 'it endureth all things,' 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Had we love to God, we should have patience.

(3.) Impatience is for want of humility. An impatient man was never humbled under the burden of sin; he that studies his sins, the numberless number of them, how they are twisted together, and sadly accented, is patient, and saith, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' Mic. i. 9. The greater noise drowns the lesser; when the sea roars, the rivers are still: he that lets his thoughts expatiate about sin, is both silent and amazed; he wonders it is no worse with him. How great then is this sin of impatience! and how excellent is contentation which is a *superfedeas* or counterpoise against this sin? The contented Christian, believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to say, unless to justify God, Psal. li. 4. That is the sin that contentation prevents. II. It prevents murmuring, a sin which is a degree higher than the other: murmuring is quarrelling with God, and inveighing against him, 'they speak against God,' Num. xxi. 5. The murmurer saith interpretatively, that God hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly: this is the language, or rather blasphemy of a murmuring spirit, God might have been a wiser and better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The Israelites are called in the same text murmurers and rebels, Numb. xvii. 10. And is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? Thou that art a murmurer, art in the account of God as a witch, a forcerer, as one that deals with a devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude; murmuring often ends in cursing: Micah's mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away, Judg. xvii. 2. So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away: our murmuring is the devil's music; this is that sin which God cannot bear: 'How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?' Num. xiv. 7. It is a sin which whets the sword against a people, it is a land-destroying sin; 'murmur ye not as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer,' 1 Cor. x. 10. It is a ripening

fin this, without mercy, it will hasten England's funerals. O then how excellent is contentation, which prevents this sin? To be contented, and yet murmur, is a solecism: A contented Christian doth acquiesce in his present condition, and doth not murmur, but admire. Herein appears the excellency of contentation; it is a spiritual antidote against sin.

*Secondly*, Contentment prevents many temptations; discontent is a devil that is always tempting. 1. *Tempt.* It puts a man upon indirect means. He that is poor and discontented will attempt any thing; he will go to the devil for riches; he that is proud and discontented will hang himself, as Ahithophel did when his counsel was rejected. Satan takes great advantage of our discontent; he loves to fish in these troubled waters. Discontent doth both eclipse reason and weaken faith; and it is Satan's policy, he doth usually break over the hedge where it is weakest. Discontent makes a breach in the soul, and usually at this breach the devil enters by a temptation, and storms the soul. How easily can the devil, by his logic, dispute a discontented Christian into sin? He forms such a syllogism as this, He that is in want must study self-preservation. But you are now in want, therefore you ought to study self-preservation. Hereupon, to make good his conclusion, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not distinguishing between what is needful and what is lawful?—What! faith he, dost thou want a livelihood? Never be such a fool as starve; take the rising side at a venture, be it good or bad. 'Eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence.'—Thus you see how the discontented man is a prey to that sad tentation, Prov. xxx. 9. 'To steal and take God's name in vain.' Contentation is a shield against tentation; for he that is contented knows as well how to want as to abound. He will not sin to get a living; though the bill of fare grows short, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air, upon God's providence, and doubts not but he shall have enough to pay for his passage to heaven. 2d *Tempt.* Discontent tempts a man to atheism and apostacy. Sure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he suffer them to be in want who have walked 'mournfully before him,' Mal. iii. 14. faith discontent. 'Throw off Christ's livery, desist from thy religion. Thus Job's wife, being discontented with her condition, faith to her husband, 'Dost thou still retain thy integrity?' Job ii. 9. As if she had said, dost thou not see, Job, what is become of all thy religion? 'Thou fearest God and eschewest evil,' and what art thou the better? See how God turns his hand against thee; he hath smitten thee in thy body, estate, relations, and 'dost thou still retain thy integrity?' What! still devout? Still weep and pray before him? Thou fool cast off religion, turn atheist. Here was a fore tentation that the devil did hand over to Job by

his discontented wife ; only his grace, as a golden shield, did ward off the blow from his heart : ‘ Thou speakest as one of the foolish women.’ What profit is it, saith the discontented person, to serve the Almighty ? Those that never trouble themselves about religion, are the prosperous men, and I in the mean while suffer want : as good give over driving the trade of religion, if this be all my reward. This is a sore temptation, and oft it prevails : atheism is the fruit that grows out of the blossom of discontent. Oh then, behold the excellency of contentment ; it doth repel this temptation. If God be mine, saith the contented spirit, it is enough ; though I have no lands or tenements, his smile makes heaven ; his loves are better than wine ; better is the gleanings of Ephraim than the vintage of Abiezer, Judges viii. 2. I have little in hand, but much in hope ; my livelihood is short, but this is his promise, ‘ even eternal life,’ 1 John ii. 25. I am persuaded by malice : but better his persecuted godliness, than prosperous wickedness. Thus divine contentment is a spiritual antidote both against sin and temptation.

6. *Excellency*, Contentment sweetens every condition. Christ turned the water into wine ; so contentment turns the waters of Marah into spiritual wine. Have I but little ? Yet it is more than I can deserve or challenge. This modicum is in mercy ; it is the fruit of Christ’s blood, it is the legacy of free-grace : a small present sent from a king is highly valued : this little I have is with a good conscience. It is not stolen waters : guilt hath not muddied or poisoned it ; it runs pure. This little is a pledge of more ; this bit of bread is an earnest of that bread which I shall eat in the kingdom of God. This little water in the cruse is an earnest of that heavenly nectar, which shall be distilled from the true vine. Do I here meet with some crosses ? My comfort is, if they be heavy, I have not far to go ; I shall but carry my cross to Golgotha, and there I shall leave it : my cross is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me ? It is well, the comforter still abides. Thus contentment, as an honey-comb, drops sweetness into every condition. Discontent is a leaven that sours every comfort, it puts aloes and wormwood upon the breast of the creature, it lessens every mercy, it trebles every cross ; but the contented spirit sucks sweetness from every flower of providence ; it can make a treacle of poison. Contentation is full of consolation.

7. *Excellency*, Contentment hath this excellency, it is the best commentator upon providence ; it makes a fair interpretation of all God’s dealings. Let the providence of God be never so dark and bloody, contentment doth construe them ever in the best sense. I may say of it, as the apostle of charity, ‘ it thinks



no evil,' 1 Cor. i. 4. Sicknefs (faith contentment) is God's furnace to refine his gold, and make it sparkle the more; the priſon is an oratory, or houſe of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from it? He ſaw perhaps my heart grew ſo much in love with it; had I been long in that fat paſture, I ſhould have ſurfeited; and the better my eſtate had been, the worſe my ſoul would have been. God is wiſe; he hath done this, either to prevent ſome ſin, or to exerciſe ſome grace. What a bleſſed frame of heart is this? A contented Chriſtian is an advocate for God againſt unbelief and impatience; whereas diſcontent takes every thing from God in the worſt ſenſe; it doth implead and censure God: this evil I feel is but a ſymptom of greater evil: God is but to undo me; 'The Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderneſs to ſlay us,' Numb. xx. 4. The contented ſoul takes all well; and when his condition is never ſo bad, he can ſay, 'yet God is good,' Pf. lxxiii. 1.

§ 2. The ſecond argument to contentment, is, a Chriſtian hath that which may make him content.

1. Hath not God given thee Chriſt? In him there are unſearchable riches, Eph. iii. 1. He is ſuch a golden mine of wiſdom and grace, that all the ſaints and angels can never dig to the bottom. As Seneca ſaid to his friend Polybius, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as Cæſar is thy friend: ſo I ſay to a believer, never complain as long as Chriſt is thy friend: He is an enriching pearl, a ſparkling diamond; the infinite luſtre of his merits makes us ſhine in God's eyes, Eph. i. 7. In him there is both fulneſs and ſweetneſs; he is unſpeakably good. Screw up your thoughts to the higheſt pinnacle, ſtretch them to the utmoſt period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent; yet they fall infinitely ſhort of thoſe ineffable and inexhauſtible treaſures which are locked up in Jeſus Chriſt: and is not here enough to give the ſoul content? A Chriſtian that wants neceſſaries, yet having Chriſt, he hath the 'one thing needful.'

2. Thy ſoul is exerciſed and enamelled with the graces of the Spirit, and is not here enough to give contentment? Grace is of a divine birth, it is the new plantation; it is the flower of the heavenly paradise; it is the embroidery of the Spirit. It is 'the ſeed of God,' 1 John iii. 9. It is 'the ſacred unction,' 1 John i. 27. It is Chriſt's protraiture in the ſoul; it is the very foundation on which the ſuperſtructure of glory is laid. Oh, of what infinite value is grace! What a jewel is faith? Well may it be called precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1. What is love, but a divine ſparkle in the ſoul? A ſoul beautified with grace, is like a room richly hung with arras, or tapeſtry, or the firmament beſpangled with glittering ſtars. Theſe are the true riches, Luke xvi. 11. which cannot ſtand with reprobation; and is not

here enough to give the soul contentment? What are all other things but like wings of a butterfly, curiously painted? but they defile the fingers. Earthly riches, saith Augustine, are full of poverty; so indeed they are. For, 1. They cannot enrich the soul: oftentimes under silken apparel, there is a thread-bare soul. 2. These are corruptible: 'Riches are not for ever,' as the wise man saith, Prov. xxvii. 24. Heaven is a place where gold and silver will not go; a believer is rich towards God, Luke xii. 21. why then art thou discontented? Hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give the box, if he gives thee the jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coin? He gives thee gold, viz. spiritual mercies. What if the water in the bottle be spent? though hast enough in the fountain: What need he complain of the world's emptiness, that hath God's fulness?—The Lord is my portion, said David, Ps. xvi. 5. Then let the lines fall where they will, in a sickbed or prison; I will say, 'the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,' 3. Art thou not heir to all the promises? Hast thou not a reversion of heaven? When thou lettest go thy hold of natural life, art thou not sure of eternal life? Hath not God given thee the earnest and first fruits of glory? Is not here enough to work the heart to contentment.

§ 3. *The third argument is, be content, for else we confute our own prayers; we pray, 'thy will be done:' it is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it best for us; why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? Either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues hypocrisy; or else we contradict ourselves, which argues folly.*

§ 4. *The fourth argument to contentment is, because now God hath his end, and Satan misseth of his end.*

1. God hath his end. God's end in all his cross providences, is to bring the heart to submit and be content; and indeed this pleaseth God much; he loves to see his children satisfied with that portion he doth carve and allot them. It contents him to see us contented; therefore let us acquiesce in God's providence; now God hath his end.

2. Satan misseth of his end. The end why the devil (though by God's permission) did smite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind: he did vex his body on purpose that he might disquiet his spirit. He hoped to bring Job into a fit of discontent; and then that he would in a passion break forth against God; but Job being so well contented with his condition, as that he falls to blessing of God, he did disappoint Satan of his hope, 'the devil will cast some of you into prison,' Rev. ii. 10. Why doth the devil throw us into prison? It is

not so much the hurting our body, as the molesting our mind, that he aims at ; he would imprison our contentment, and disturb the regular motion of our souls ; this is his design : it is not so much the putting us into a prison, as the putting us into a passion, that he attempts ; but by holy contentation, Satan loseth his prey, he misseth of his end. The devil hath often deceived us ; the best way to deceive him, is by contentation in the midst of temptation ; our contentment will discontent Satan. Oh, let us not gratify our enemy. Discontent is the devil's delight ; now it is as he would have it, he loves to warm himself at the fire of our passions. Repentance is the joy of the angels, and discontent is the joy of the devils : as the devil danceth at discord, so he sings at discontent. The fire of our passions makes the devil a bon-fire ; it is a kind of heaven to him to see us torturing ourselves with our own troubles ; but by holy contentment we frustrate him of his purpose, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

§ 5. *The fifth argument is, by contentment a Christian gets a victory over himself ;* for a man to be able to rule his own spirit, this of all others is the most noble conquest. Passion denotes weakness : to be discontented is suitable to flesh and blood : but to be in every state content : reproached, yet content ; imprisoned, yet content ; this is above nature : this is some of that holy valour and chivalry, which only a divine spirit is able to infuse. In the midst of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the spirit calmed : this is a conquest worthy indeed of the garland of honour. Holy Job, divested and turned out of all, leaving his scarlet, and embracing the dunghill, (a sad catastrophe) yet he had learned contentment. It is said, ' he fell upon the ground and worshipped,' Job i. 20. One would have thought he should have fallen upon the ground and blasphemed ! No, he fell and worshipped. He adored God's justice and holiness ; behold the strength of grace ! here was an humble submission, yet a noble conquest ; he got the victory over himself. It is no great matter for a man to yield to his own passions, this is facile and feminine ; but to content himself in denying of himself, this is sacred.

§ 6. The sixth great argument to work the heart to contentment, is the consideration that all God's providences, how cross or bloody soever, shall do a believer good ; ' and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. Not only all good things, but all evil things work for good ; and shall we be discontented at that which works for our good ? Suppose our troubles are twisted together, and sadly accented ; what if sickness, poverty reproach, law-suits, &c. do unite and muster their forces against us ? All shall work for

good ; our maladies shall be our medicines : and shall we re-pine at that which shall undoubtedly do us good ? ‘Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness,’ Psal. cxxii. 4. Affliction may be baptized Marah ; it is bitter, but physical.—Because this is so full of comfort, and may be a most excellent catholicon against discontent, I shall a little expatiate.

Qu. *It will be enquired how the evils of affliction work for good ?* Ans. Several ways.

*First*, They are disciplinary ; they teach us. The psalmist having very elegantly described the church’s trouble, Ps. lxxiv. prefixeth this title to the psalm [*Maschil*.] which signifies a psalm giving instruction ; that which seals up instruction, works for good. God puts us sometimes under the black rod ; but it is *virga disciplinæ*, a rod of discipline ; ‘Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it,’ Mic. ix. 9. God makes our adversity our university. Affliction is a preacher ; ‘Blow the trumpet in Tekoah,’ Jer. vi. 1. The trumpet was to preach to the people, as appears, ver. 6. ‘Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem.’ Sometimes God speaks to the minister to lift up his voice like a trumpet, Isa. lviii. 1. and here he speaks to the trumpet to lift up its voice like a minister. Afflictions teach us, (1.) Humility : commonly prosperous and proud. Corrections are God’s corrosives to eat out the proud flesh. Jesus Christ is a lily of the valleys, Cant. ii. 1. He dwells in an humble heart : God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility ; ‘remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall : my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me,’ Lam. iii. 19, 20. When men are grown high, God hath no better way with them, than to brew them up a cup of wormwood. Afflictions are compared to thorns, Hos. ii. 8. God’s thorns are to prick the bladder of pride : Suppose a man run at another with a sword to kill him ; accidentally, it only lets out his imposthume ; this doth him good. God’s sword is to let out the imposthume of pride ; and shall that which makes us humble, make us discontented ? (2.) Afflictions teach us repentance ; ‘thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised. I repented ; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh,’ &c. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. Repentance is the precious fruit that grows upon the cross. When the fire is put under the still, the water drops from the roses ; fiery afflictions make the waters of repentance drop and distil from the eyes : and is here any cause of discontent ? (3.) Afflictions teach us to pray better, ‘they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them,’ Isa. xxvi. 16. Before they would say a prayer ; now they poured out a prayer. Jonah was asleep in the ship ; but awake and at prayer in the whale’s belly. When God puts under the fire-brands of affliction, now our

hearts boil over the more ; God loves to have his children possessed with a spirit of prayer. Never did David the sweet singer of Israel, tune his harp more melodiously, never did he pray better than when he was upon the waters. Thus afflictions do indisciplin, and shall we be discontent at that which is for our good.

*Secondly*, Afflictions are probatory, Ps. lxxvi. 10, 11. Gold is not the worse for being tried, or corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, it tries what metal we are made of ; affliction is God's fan and his sieve. It is good that men be known : some serve God for a livery : they are like the fisherman, that makes use of the net, only to catch the fish ; so they go afishing with the net of religion, only to catch preferment ; affliction discovers these. The Donatists went to the Goths, when the Arians prevailed ; hypocrites will fail in a storm ; true grace holds out in the winter-season. That is a precious faith, which, like the stars, shines brightest in the darkest night. It is good that our graces should be brought to trial ; thus we have the comfort, and the gospel the honour : and why then discontented.

*Thirdly*, Afflictions are expurgatory ; these evils work for our good, because they work out sin, and shall I be discontented at this ? What if I have more trouble, if I have less sin ? The brightest day hath its clouds, the purest gold its dross, the most refined soul hath some lees of corruption. The saints lose nothing in the furnace but what they can well spare, their dross ; is not this for our good ? Why then should we murmur ? ' I am come to set fire on the earth,' Luke xii. 49. Tertullian understands it of the fire of affliction. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds, and set them at liberty in the furnace ; so the fire of affliction serves to burn the bonds of iniquity. ' By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged ; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin,' Isa. xxvii. 9. When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his soul : when it comes to a godly man, it only takes away his sin : is there any cause why we should be discontented ? God steeps us in the brinish waters of affliction, that he may take out our spots. God's people are his husbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods : God's ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of sin ; his harrowing of us to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive the seeds of grace ; and if this be all, why should we be discontented ?

*Fourthly*, Afflictions do both exercise and increase our grace. (1.) The exercise grace : affliction doth breath out graces ; every thing is most in its excellency, when it is most in its exer-

cise. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be asleep, and hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers ; or the sun when it is masked with a cloud ? A sick man is living, but not lively ; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to see grace in the eclipse. Now faith puts forth its purest and most noble acts in times of affliction ; God makes the fall of the leaf the spring of our graces. What if we are more passive, if graces be more active. (2.) Afflictions do increase grace : as the wind serves to increase and blow up the flame ; so doth the windy blasts of affliction augment and blow up our graces : grace spends not in the furnace, but it is like the widow's oil in the cruse, which did increase by pouring out. The torch, when it is beaten, burns brightest ; so doth grace when it exercised by sufferings. Sharp frosts nourish the good corn, so do sharp afflictions grace. Some plants grow better in the shade than in the sun : as the bay and the cypress ; the shade of adversity is better for some than the sunshine of prosperity. Naturalists observe, that the colewort thrives better when it is watered with salt water than with fresh : so do some thrive better in the salt water of affliction, and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and fructify more ?

*Fifthly*, These afflictions do bring more of God's immediate presence into the soul. When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted, ' I will be with him in trouble,' Ps. xci. 15. It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is, by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetening the present trial. God will be with us in trouble, not only to behold us, but to uphold us : as he was with Daniel in the lions' den, and the three children in the fiery furnace. What if we have more trouble than others have, if we have more of God with us than others ? We never have sweeter smiles from God's face, than when the world begins to look strange : thy statutes have been my song ; where ? ' Not when I was upon the throne, but in the house of my pilgrimage,' Ps. cxix. 54. We read ' the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire,' 1 Kings xix. 11. but in a metaphorical and spiritual sense ; when the wind of affliction blows upon a believer, God is in the wind ; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, viz. to sanctify, to support, to sweeten. If God be with us, the furnace shall be turned into a festival, the prison into a paradise, the earthquake into a joyful dance. O why should I be discontented, when I have more of God's company.

*Sixthly*, These evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them certificates of God's love, and are evidences of his special favour. Affliction is the saint's livery : it is a badge and

cognizance of honour ; that the God of glory should look upon a worm, and take so much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than lose him, is an high act of favour. God's rod is a sceptre of dignity, Job calls God's afflicting of us, his magnifying of us, Job vii. 17. Some men's prosperity have been their shame, when others' affliction hath been their crown.

*Seventhly*, These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 16. That which works for my glory in heaven, works for my good : We do not read in scripture that any man's honour or riches do work for him a weight of glory, but afflictions do ; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory ? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory ; not that our sufferings do merit glory (as the papists do wickedly gloss), but though they are not *causa*, they are *via* ; they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us, as he did our captain, ' perfect through sufferings,' Heb. ii. 10. And shall not all this make us contented with our condition ? Oh, I beseech you, look not upon the evil of affliction, but the good. Afflictions in scripture are called visitations, Job vii. 18. The word in the Hebrew to visit, is taken in a good sense, as well as bad ; God's afflictions are but friendly visits : behold here God's rod, like Aaran's rod, blossoming, and Jonathan's rod, it hath honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve out our sins ; the sickness of the body cures a sin-sick soul ; O then, instead of murmuring and being discontented, bless the Lord ; hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to hell and never stopped.

§ 7. *The seventh argument to contentation.*

The next argument to contentation is, consider the evil of discontent. Mal-content hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man ? Sometimes he will sit up in his bed, by and by he will lie down, and when he is down he is not quiet ; first he turns on the one side, and then on the other, he is restless : this is just the emblem of a discontented spirit ; the man is not sick, yet he is never well ; sometimes he likes such a condition of life, he is soon weary ; and then another condition of life ; and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased, this is an evil under the sun.

Now the evil of discontent appears in three things.

*Evil* 1. The sordidness of it is unworthy of a Christian.

1. It is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an heathen, bear thy condition quietly, *nosce te esse hominem*, know thou art a man : so I say, bear thy condition contentedly, *nosce te esse Christianum*, know thou art a Christian. Thou professest

to live by faith ; what ! and not content ? Faith is a grace that doth substantiate things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. Faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promises ; faith lives not by bread alone, when the water is spent in the bottle, faith knows whither to have recourse ; now to see a Christian dejected in the want of visible supplies and recruits, where is faith ? Oh, faith one, my estate in the world is down. Aye, and which is worse, thy faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented, unless God let down the vessel to thee, as he did to Peter, ‘ wherein were all manner of beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air ? ’ Acts x. 12. Must you have the first and second course ? This is like Thomas, ‘ unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe,’ John xx. 25. So, unless thou hast a sensible feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True faith will trust God where it cannot trace him, and will adventure upon God’s bond, though it hath nothing in view. ‘ You who are discontented, because you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your faith is a non-entity, or at best but an embryo ; ’ it is a weak faith that must have stilts and crutches to support it. Nay, discontent is not only below faith, but below reason : why are you discontented ? Is it because you are dispossessed of such comforts ? Well, and have you not reason to guide you ? Doth not reason tell you, that you are but tenants at will ? and may not God turn you out when he pleases ? You hold not your estate *jure*, but *gratia* ; not by juridical right, but upon favour and courtesy.

2. It is unworthy of the relation we stand in to God ; a Christian is invested with the title and privilege of sonship, Eph. i. 5. He is an heir of the promise : Oh, consider the lot of free-grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Christ, and of the blood-royal, thou art advanced, in some sense, above the angels ; ‘ why then art thou, being the king’s son, lean from day to day ? ’ 2 Sam. xiii. 4. Why art thou discontented ? Oh, how unworthy is this ! As if the heir to some great monarch should go pining up and down, because he may not pick such a flower.

*Evil* 2. Consider the sinfulness of it ; which appears in three things ; (1.) The causes ; (2.) The concomitants ; (3.) The consequences of it.

1. It is sinful in the causes, which are these.

1. *Pride*. He that thinks highly of his deserts, usually esteems meanly of his condition : a discontented man is a proud man, he thinks himself better than others ; therefore finds fault with the wisdom of God, that he is not above others. Thus the thing formed, saith to him that formed it, ‘ why hast thou made me thus ? ’ Rom. ix. 20. Why am I not higher ? Dis-



contents are nothing else but the æstuations and boilings over of pride.

2. The second cause of discontent is, envy, which Augustine calls the sin of the devil; Satan envied Adam the glory of paradise, and the robe of innocency; he that envies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which God's providence doth parcel out to him; as envy stirs up strife, (this made the Plebeian faction so strong among the Romans) so it creates discontent: the envious man looks so much upon the blessings which another enjoys, that he cannot see his own mercies, and so doth continually vex and torture himself. Cain envied that his brother's sacrifice was accepted, and his rejected; hereupon he was discontented, and presently murderous thoughts began to arise in his heart.

3. The third cause is, covetousness. This is a radical sin. Whence are vexing law-suits, but from discontent? and whence is discontent, but from covetousness? Covetousness and contentedness cannot dwell in the same heart. Avarice is an heluo, that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like Behemoth, 'Behold he drinketh up a river, he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth,' Job xl. 33. 'There are four things (saith Solomon) say not, it is enough.' I may add a fifth, the heart of a covetous man, he is still craving. Covetousness is like a wolf in the breast, which is ever feeding; and because a man is not satisfied, he is never content.

4. The fourth cause of discontent is, jealousy, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholy, and sometimes misapprehension. The spirit of jealousy causeth this evil spirit. Jealously 'is the rage of a man,' Prov. vi. 34. And oft, this is nothing but suspicion and fancy: yet such as creates real discontent.

5. The fifth cause of discontent is distrust, which is a great degree of Atheism. The discontented person is ever distrustful. The bill of provision grows low; I am in these straits and exigencies, can God help me? 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' Sure he cannot. My estate is exhausted, can God recruit me? My friends are gone, can God raise me up more? Sure the arm of his power is shrunk. I am like the dry fleece, can any water come upon this fleece? 'If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?' 1 Kings vii. 2. Thus the anchor of hope, and the shield of faith, being cast away, the soul goes pining up and down.

Discontent is nothing else but the echo of unbelief: and remember, distrust is worse than distress.

II. Discontent is evil in the concomitants of it, which are two.

1. Discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. A Chris-

tian of a right temper should be ever cheerful in God ; ‘ serve the Lord with gladness,’ Pf. c. 2. A sign the oil of grace hath been poured into the heart, when ‘ the oil of gladness’ shines in the countenance. Cheerfulness credits religion ; how can the discontented person be cheerful ? Discontent is a dogged, fullen humour ; because we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good word or look from us ; as the bird in the cage, because she is pent up, and cannot fly in the open air, therefore beats herself against the cage, and is ready to kill herself. Thus that peevish prophet ; ‘ I do well to be angry to the death,’ Jonah iv.

2. Discontent is accompanied with unthankfulness ; because we have not all we desire, we never mind the mercies which we have ; we deal with God as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet : the prophet Elijah had been a means to keep her alive in the famine ; for it was for her sake, that her meal in the barrel, and her oil in the cruse failed not : But as soon as ever her son dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the prophet ; ‘ What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God ? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and slay my son ?’ 1 Kings i. 18. So ungratefully do we deal with God : we can be content to receive mercies from God ; but if he doth cross us in the least thing, then, through discontent, we grow touchy and impatient, and are ready to fly upon God ; thus God loseth all his mercies. We read in scripture of the thank-offering, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. The discontented person cuts God short of this ; the Lord loseth his thank-offering. A discontented Christian repines in the midst of mercies, as Adam who sinned in the midst of paradise. Discontent is a spider that sucks the poison of unthankfulness out of the sweetest flower of God’s blessing, and a devilish chymistry that extracts dross out of the most refined gold. The discontented person thinks every thing he doth for God too much, and every thing God doth for him too little. O what a sin is unthankfulness ! it is an accumulative sin. When Cicero said of parricide, I may say of ingratitude ; ‘ there are many sins bound up in this one sin :’ It is a voluminous wickedness ; and how full of this sin is discontent ? A discontented Christian, because he hath not all the world, therefore dishonours God with the mercies which he hath. God made Eve out of Adam’s rib, to be an helper (as Chrysostom saith) but the devil hath made an arrow of this rib, and shot Adam to the heart : so doth discontent take the rib of God’s mercy, and ungratefully shoot at him ; estate, liberty shall be employed against God. Thus it is oftentimes. Behold then how discontent and ingratitude are interwoven and twined one with the other : Thus discontent is sinful in its concomitants.

III. It is sinful in its consequences, which are these :

(1.) It makes a man very unlike the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is a meek Spirit. The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove, Mat. iii. 6. A dove is the emblem of meekness : a discontented spirit is not a meek spirit,

(2.) It makes a man like the devil : the devil being swelled with the poison of envy and malice, is never content. Just so is the mal-content. The devil is an unquiet spirit, he is still walking about, 1 Pet. v. 8. It is his rest to be walking. And herein is the discontented person like him ; for he goes up and down vexing himself, ‘ seeking rest, and finding none ;’ he is the devil’s picture.

(3.) Discontent disjoins the soul, it untunes the heart for duty ; ‘ is any man afflicted, let him pray,’ Jam. v. 13. But, is any man discontented ? How shall he pray ? ‘ Lift up pure hands without wrath,’ 1 Tim. v. 8. Discontent is full of wrath and passion ; the mal-content cannot lift up pure hands ; he lifts up leprous hands, he poisons his prayers ; will God accept of a poisoned sacrifice ? Chrysostom compares prayer to a fine garland ; those, saith he, that make a garland, their hands had need to be clean ; prayer is a precious garland, the heart that makes it had need to be clean. Discontent throws poison into the spring (which was death among the Romans) ; discontent puts the heart into a disorder and mutiny, and such an one cannot serve the Lord ‘ without distraction.’

4. Discontent sometimes unfits for the very use of reason ; Jonah, in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy and nonsense ; ‘ I do well, said, he, to be angry unto the death,’ Jon. iv. 8. What ! To be angry with God ! and to die for anger ? Sure he did not know well what he said. When discontent transports, then like Moses, we speak ‘ unadvisedly with our lips.’ This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason.

(5.) Discontent doth not only disquiet a man’s self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles families, parishes, &c. If there be but one string out of tune, it spoils all the music. One discontented spirit makes jarrings and discords among others. It is this ill humour that breeds quarrels and law-suits. Whence is all our contentions, but for want of contentation ? From whence ‘ come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts ?’ James iv. 1. In particular from the lust of discontent ? Why did Absalom raise a war against his father, and would have taken off not only his crown, but his head ? Was it not his discontent ? Absalom would be king. Why did Ahab stone Naboth ? Was it not discontent about the vineyard ? Oh this devil of discontent ! Thus you have seen the sinfulness of it.

*Evil* 3. Consider the simplicity of it. I may say as the Psalmist, 'surely they are disquieted in vain : ' Pf. xxxix. 6. which appears thus ;

1. Is it not a vain simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable ? God hath put a vicissitude into the creature ; all the world rings changes ; and for me to meet with inconstancy here, to lose a friend, estate, to be in a constant fluctuation, is no more than to see a flower wither, or a leaf drop off in autumn, there is an autumn upon every comfort, a fall of the leaf ; now it is extreme folly to be discontented at the loss of those things which are in their own nature loseable. What Solomon saith of riches, is true of all things under the sun, ' they take wings.' Noah's dove brought an olive branch in its mouth, but presently flew out of the ark, and never returned more ; such a comfort brings to us honey in its mouth, but it hath wings ; and to what purpose should we be troubled, unless we had wings to fly after and overtake it ?

2. Discontent is a heart-breaking : ' by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken,' Prov. xv. 13. It takes away the comfort of life. There is none of us but may have many mercies, if we can see them ; now, because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. Jonah having his gourd smitten (a withering vanity) was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the whale's belly ; he takes no comfort of his life, but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this ? We must have all or none ; herein we are like children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, because they may have no bigger. Discontent eats out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is, even to our health : for discontent, as it doth disfigure the mind, so it doth pine the body ! it frets as a moth, and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals. The pleurisy of discontent brings the body into a consumption ; and is not this folly ?

3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but it makes the cross heavier. A contented spirit goes cheerfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as insupportable, as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain ; but if the leg be sore, then the fetters trouble. Discontent of mind is the sore that makes the fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more than the trouble itself, it steeps the affliction in wormwood. When Christ was upon the cross, the Jews brought him gall and vinegar to drink, that it might add to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man in affliction, gall and vinegar to drink ; this is worse than the

affliction itself. Is it not folly for a man to embitter his own cross?

4. Discontent spins out our troubles the longer. A Christian is discontent because he is in want; and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented: he murmurs because he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we use to do with our children; when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing; but if we see them cry and fret, then we withhold from them; we get nothing from God by our discontent but blows, the more the child struggles, the more it is beaten; when we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his strokes; God will tame our curst hearts. What got Israel by their peevishness? They were within eleven days journey of Canaan, and now they were discontented, and began to murmur: God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilderness. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have seen the evil of discontent. I have been long upon this argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam fatis dicitur*.

§ 8. *The eight argument to contentation.*

The next argument or motive to contentment is this, Why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? Perhaps if he had more he would be less content; covetousness is a dry drunkenness. The world is such, that the more we have, the more we crave; it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? Not by putting oil on the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing the fuel. When the appetite is enflamed after riches, how may a man be satisfied? Not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the fuel, &c. Moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented has enough. A man in a fever or dropsy thirsts; how do you satisfy him? Not by giving him liquid things, which will inflame his thirst the more; but by removing the cause, and so curing the distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

§ 9. *The ninth argument to contentation.*

The next argument to contentment is the shortness of life. It is but a vapour, saith James, Jam. iv. 14. Life is a wheel ever running. The poets painted time with wings to shew the volubility and swiftness of it. Job compares it to a swift post, Job ix. 25. (Our life rides post) and to a day, not a year. It is indeed like a day. Infancy is as it were the day-break, youth is the sun-rising, full growth is the sun in the meridian, old age is sun-setting, sickness is the evening, then comes the night of death. How quickly is this day of life spent? Often-

times this sun goes down at noon-day : life ends before the evening of old age comes ; nay, sometimes the sun of life sets presently after sun-rising. Quickly after the dawning of infancy the night of death approaches. Oh, how short is the life of man ! The consideration of the brevity of life, may work the heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day ; thou hast but a short way to go, and what needs a long provision for a short way ? If a traveller hath but enough to bring him to his journey's end, he desires no more. We have but a day to live, and perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day ; why if God gives us but enough to bear our charges, till night, it is sufficient, let us be content. If a man had the lease of an house, or farm but for two or three days, and he should fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiscreet ? So, when we have but a short time here, and death calls us presently off the stage, to thirst immoderately after the world, and pull down our souls to build up an estate, it is an extreme folly. Therefore, as Esau said once, in a profane sense, concerning his birth-right, ' lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birth-right do me ? ' So let a Christian say in a religious sense, lo, I am even at the point of death, my grave is going to be made, and what good will the world do me ! If I have but enough till sun-setting, I am content.

§ 10. *The tenth argument to contentation.*

The tenth argument or motive to contentment is, consider seriously the nature of a prosperous condition. There are in a prosperous estate three things.

1. *Plus molestie*, more trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not so much content and sweetness in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour. Sad solicitous thoughts do often attend a prosperous condition. Care is the *malus genius*, or evil spirit which haunts the rich man, and will not suffer him to be quiet. When his chest is full of gold, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, or how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Oh the troubles and perplexities that do attend prosperity ! The world's high seats are very uneasy ; sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth with its heat ; the bee gives honey, but sometimes it stings : prosperity hath its sweetness, and also its sting, ' competency with contentment is far more eligible.' Never did Jacob sleep better than when he had the heavens for his canopy, and a hard stone for his pillow. A large voluminous estate, is but like a long trailing garment, which is more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger, and that two ways.

First, *ex parte, ipsius*, in respect of a man's self, the rich man's

table is oft his snare ; he is ready to ingulph himself too deep in these sweet waters. In this sense it is hard to know how to abound. It must be a strong brain that bears heady wine ; he had need have much wisdom and grace, that knows how to bear an high condition ; either he is ready to kill himself with care, or to surfeit himself with luscious delights. Oh the hazard of honour, the damage of dignity ! Pride, security, rebellion, are the three worms that breed of plenty, Deut. xxxii. 15. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. How soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease ? Prosperity is often a trumpet, that sounds a retreat, it calls men off from the pursuit of religion. The sun of prosperity oft dulls and puts out the fire of zeal, how many souls hath the pleurisy of abundance killed ? ‘ They that will be rich, fall into snares,’ 1 Tim. vi. 10. The world is birdlime at our feet, it is full of golden sands, but they are quick-sands. Prosperity, like smooth Jacob, will supplant and betray ; a great estate, without much vigilancy, will be a thief to rob us of heaven ; such as are upon the pinnacle of honour, are in most danger of falling.

A lower estate is less hazardous, the little pinnace rides safe by the shore, when the gallant ship advancing with its mast and top-sail, is cast away. *Homo victus in paridiso, victor in stercore.* Adam in paradise was overcome, when Job on the dung-hill was a conqueror. Samson fell asleep in Dalilah’s lap : some have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awakened till they have been in hell. The world’s fawning is worse than its frowning ; and it is more to be feared when it smiles than when it thunders. Prosperity, in scripture, is compared to a candle, Job xxix. 3. ‘ When his candle shined upon my head.’ How many have burnt their wings about this candle ! *Segetem ubertas nimia sternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit nimiae fecunditas :* the corn being over ripe, sheds, and fruit, when it mellow, begins to rot ; when men do mellow with the sin of prosperity commonly their souls begin to rot in sin. ‘ How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven !’ Luke xviii. 24. His golden weights keep him from ascending to the hill of God ; and shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower orb ? What if we are not in so much bravery and gallantry as others ? We are not in so much danger ; as we want the honour of the world, so the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance ! We see, by common experience, that lunatics, when the moon is declining and in the wane, are sober enough ; but when it is full they are wild and more exorbitant : when men’s estates are in the wane, they are more serious about their souls, more humble : but when it is the full of the moon, and they have abundance, then their hearts begin to swell with their estates,

and are scarce themselves. Those that write concerning the several climates, observe, that such as live in the northern parts of the world, if you bring them into the south part, they lose their stomachs and die quickly ; but those that live in the more southern and hot climates, bring them into the north, and their stomachs mend, and they are long-lived ; give me leave to apply it, bring a man from the cold, starving climate of poverty, into the hot southern climate of prosperity, and he begins to lose his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thousand to one, if all his religion doth not die ; but bring a Christian from the south to the north, from a rich flourishing estate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his stomach mends, he hath a better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at six before ; this man is now like to live and hold out in his religion : be content then with a modicum ; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it sufficeth.

2. A prosperous condition is dangerous in regard of others ; a great estate, for the most part draws envy to it, Gen. xxvi. 12, 13, 14. Whereas in little there is quiet. David a shepherd was quiet ; but David a courtier was pursued by his enemies : envy cannot endure a superior ; an envious man knows not how to live but upon the ruins of his neighbours ; he raiseth himself higher by bringing others lower. Prosperity is an eye-sore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced. The barren tree grows peaceably : no man meddles with the ash or willow ; but the apple-tree and the damaskin shall have many rude suitors. Oh then be contented to carry a lesser sail ; he that hath less revenues hath less envy ; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest shew in the world, are the white for envy and malice to shoot at.

3. A prosperous condition hath in it a greater reckoning ; every man must be responsible for his talents. Thou that hast great possessions in the world, dost thou trade thy estate for God's glory ? Art thou rich in good works ? Grace makes a private person a common good. Dost thou disburse thy money for public uses ? It is lawful, in this sense, to put out our money to use. O let us all remember an estate is a depositum ; we are but stewards, and our Lord and Master will ere long say, ' give an account of your stewardship : ' the greater our estate, the greater our charge, the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a lesser mill going in the world, be content ; God will expect less from you, where he hath sowed more sparingly.

§ 11. *The eleventh argument to contentation.*

The eleventh argument is the example of those who have been



eminent for contentation. Examples are usually more forcible than precepts. Abraham, being called out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bid him offer up his son Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2. This was great work; Isaac was *filius senectutis*, the son of his old age; *filius delectionis*, the son of his love; *filius promissi*, the son of the promise; Christ the Messiah was to come of his line. 'In Isaac shall thy seed be blessed:' so that to offer up Isaac seemed not only to oppose Abraham's reason, but his faith too; for, if Isaac died, the world (for ought he knew) must be without a Mediator. Besides, if Isaac be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it but Abraham? Must the father needs be the executioner? Must he that was the instrument of giving Isaac his being, be the instrument of taking it away?—Yet Abraham doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes against hope, and is content with God's prescription: so, when God called him to leave his country, Heb. xi. 8. he was content. Some would have argued thus: What! Leave my friends, my native soil, my brave situation, and go turn pilgrim? Abraham is content; besides, Abraham went blindfold, 'he knew not whither he went,' ver. 8. God held him in suspense, he must go wander he knew not where; and when he doth come to the place God had laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there: the world doth seldom cast a favourable aspect upon strangers, Gen. xxxi. 15. Yet he is content and obeys, 'he sojourned in the land of promise,' Heb. xi. 9. Behold a little his pilgrimage. First he goes to Charran, a city in Mesopotamia: when he had sojourned there a while, his father dies; then he removed to Sichem, then to Bethlehem in Canaan; there a famine ariseth; then he went down to Egypt, after that he returns into Canaan; when he comes there (it is true he had a promise) but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of land, but was an exile: in this time of his sojourning he buried his wife; and as for his dwellings he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poor cottages; all this was enough to have broken any man's heart. Abraham might think thus with himself, is this the land I must possess? here is no probability of any good; all things are against me; well, is he discontent? No; God saith to him, Abraham, go, leave thy country: and this word was enough to lead him all the world over; he is presently upon his march; here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to heathen Zeno (of whom Seneca speaks), who had once been very rich, hearing of a shipwreck, and that all his goods were drowned at sea; fortune, saith he, (he spake in an heathen dialect) hath dealt with me, and would have me now study philosophy; he was content to change his

course of life, to leave off being a merchant, and turn a philosopher. And if an heathen said thus, shall not a Christian much more say when the world is drained from him, *Jubet Deus mundum derelinquitur et Christum expeditus sequi* : God would have me leave off following the world, and study Christ more, and how to get to heaven. Do I see an heathen contented, and a Christian disquieted ? How did heathens vilify those things which Christians did magnify ? Though they knew not God, nor what true happiness meant, yet would speak very sublimely of a numen or deity, and of the life to come, as Aristotle and Plato ; and for those Elysian delights, which they did but fancy, they undervalued and contemned the things here below ; It was the doctrine they taught their scholars, and which some of them practised, that they should strive to be contented with a little ; they were willing to make an exchange, and have less gold, and more learning : and shall not we be content then to have less of the world, so we may have more of Christ ? May not a Christian blush to see the heathens content with a *viaticum*, so much as would recruit nature ? and to see themselves so transported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the bill of provision grows short, they murmur, and are like Micah, ‘ have ye taken away my gods, and do you ask me what I ail ? ’ Judg. xviii. 24. Have heathens gone so far in contentation ? And is it not sad for us to come short of heaven ? These heroes of their time, how did they embrace death itself ? Socrates died in prison, Hercules was burnt alive, Cato (whom Seneca calls the image and Portraiture of virtue) thrust through with a sword ; but how bravely, and with contentment of spirit did they die ? “ Shall I, said Seneca, weep for Cato, or Regulus, or the rest of those worthies, that died with so much valour and patience ? ” Did not cross providence make them to alter their countenance ? And do I see a Christian appalled and amazed ? Did not death affright them ? And doth it distract us ? Did the spring-head of nature rise so high ? And shall not grace, like the waters of the sanctuary, rise higher ? We that pretend to live by faith, may we not go to school to them, who had no other pilot but reason to guide them ? Nay, let me come a step lower, to creatures void of reason ; we see every creature is contented with its allowance ; the beasts with their provender, the birds with their nests, they live only upon providence ; and shall we make ourselves below them ? Let a Christian go to school to the ox and the ass, to learn contentedness ; we think we never have enough, and are still laying up ; the fowls of the air do not lay up, ‘ they reap not, nor gather into barns,’ Mat. vi. 26. It is an argument which Christ brings to make Christians contented with their condition : the birds do not lay up, yet they are

provided for, and are contented ; are ye not faith Christ, much better than they ? But if you are discontented, are you not much worse than they ? Let these examples quicken us.

§ 12. *The twelfth argument to contentation.*

The twelfth argument to contentment is, whatever change of trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the hell he shall have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name or estate, I may say of it as Athanasius of his banishment, it is a little cloud that will soon be blown over ; and then his gulph is shot, his hell is past. Death begins a wicked man's hell, but it puts an end to a godly man's hell. Think with thyself, what if I endure this ? It is but a temporary hell ; indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an easy hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of damnation ? Lazarus could not get a crumb ; he was so diseased, that the dogs took pity on him, and, as if they had been his physicians, licked his sores : but this was an easy hell, the angels quickly fetched him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midst of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more hell, but paradise. If our hell be here, we may see to the bottom of it ; it is but skin deep, it cannot touch the soul, and we may see to the end of it ; it is an hell that is short-lived ; after a wet night of affliction, comes a bright morning of the resurrection ; if our lives are short, our trials cannot be long : as our riches take wings and fly, so do our sufferings ; then let us be contented.

§ 13. *The thirteenth argument to contentation.*

The last argument to contentment, is this, to have a competency, and to want contentment, is a great judgment. For a man to have an huge stomach, that whatever meat you give him, he is still craving, and never satisfied ; you use to say, this is a great judgment upon the man ; thou who art a devourer of money, and yet never hast enough, but still criest, give, give, this is a sad judgment ; ‘ they shall eat, and not have enough,’ Hos. iv. 10. The throat of a malicious man is an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13. so is the heart of a covetous man. Covetousness is not only *malum culpæ*, but *malum pænæ* ; it is not only a sin, but the punishment of a sin. It is a secret curse upon a covetous person, he shall thirst, and thirst, and never be satisfied ; ‘ he that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver,’ Eccl. v. 10. And is not this a curse ? What was it but a severe judgment upon the people of Judah ? ‘ Ye eat, but ye have not enough ; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink,’ Hag. i. 6. Oh let us take heed of this plague. Did Esau say to his brother, ‘ I have abundance, my brother,’ Gen. xxxvii. 9. or, as we translate it, I have enough ; and shall not a Christian say much more ? It is sad, that our hearts should be dead to heav-

venly things, and a sponge to suck in earthly. Yet all that hath been said, will not work our minds to heavenly contentation.

CHAP. XII. *Three things inserted by way of caution.*

In the next place, I come to lay down some necessary cautions: though (I say) a man should be content in every estate, yet there are three estates in which he must not be contented.

*Caution 1.* He must not be contented in a natural estate; here he must learn not to be content. A sinner in his pure naturals is under the wrath of God, John iii. 16. and shall he be content, when that dreadful vial is going to be poured out? Is it nothing to be under the scorplings of divine fury? 'Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' A sinner, as a sinner, is under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. and shall he in this estate be contented? Who would be contented to stay in the enemy's quarters? While we sleep in the lap of sin, the devil doth to us as the Philistines did to Samson, cut the lock out of our strength, and put out our eyes; be not content, O sinner, in this estate. For a man to be in debt, body and soul, in fear every hour to be arrested and carried prisoner to hell, shall he now be content? Here I preach against contentation. Oh get out of this condition: I would hasten you out of it, as the angel hastened Lot out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 15. There is the smell of the fire and brimstone upon you. The longer a man stays in his sin, the more sin doth strengthen; it is hard to get out of sin, when the heart, as a garrison, is victualled and fortified. A young plant is easily removed; but when the tree is once rooted, there is no stirring of it: thou who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will cost thee many a sad pull ere thou art plucked out of thy natural estate, Jer. vi. 16. It is an hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart; 'he travaileth with iniquity,' Ps. vii. 14. be assured, the longer you travail with your sins, the more and sharper pangs you must expect in the new birth. O be not contented with your natural estate. David saith, 'why art thou disquieted, O my soul?' Ps. xliii. 5. But a sinner should say to himself, why art thou not disquieted, O my soul? Why is it that thou layest afflictions so to heart, and canst not lay sin to heart? It is a mercy when we are disquieted about sin. A man had better be at the trouble of setting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; blessed is that trouble that brings the soul to Christ. It is one of the worst sights to see a bad conscience quiet; of the two, better is a fever than a lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content; what! content to go to hell?

*Caution 2.* Though, in regard of externals, a man should be in every state content, yet he must not be content in such a condition, wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a man's trade be such, that he can hardly use it, but he must trespass

upon a command (and so make a trade of sin) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case, had better knock off and divert; better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So, for servants who live in a profane family (the suburbs of hell) where the name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come out of the tents of these sinners; there is a double danger in living among the profane.

1. Lest we come to be infected with the poison of their ill example. Joseph, living in Pharaoh's court, had learned to swear 'by the life of Pharaoh,' Gen. xlii. 15. We are prone to suck in example; men take in deeper impressions by the eye than by the ear. Dives was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that seeing him sin, trode just in his steps; therefore, saith he, 'I pray thee send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren: that he testify to them, that they come not into this place of torment,' Luke xvi. 27, 28. Dives knew which way they went; it is easy to catch a disease from another, but not to catch health. The bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad. Take an equal quantity and proportion, so much sweet wine with so much sour vinegar; the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the plague, 1 Kings viii. 39. And to leaven, 1 Cor. v. 7. To shew of what a spreading nature it is. A bad master makes a bad servant. Jacob's cattle, by looking on the rods which were speckled and ring-straked, conceived like the rods. We do as we see others do before us, especially those that are above us. If the head be sick, the other parts of the body are disordered. If the sun shine not upon the mountains, it must needs set in the vallies. We pray, 'lead us not into temptation:' Lot was the world's miracle, who kept himself fresh in Sodom's salt water.

2. By living in an evil family, we are liable to incur their punishment; 'Pour out thy wrath upon the families that call not upon thy name,' Jer. x. 25. For want of pouring out of prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. It is dangerous living in the tents of Kedar. When 'God sends his flying roll, written within and without with curses, it enters into the house of the thief and the perjurer, and consumes the timber and the stones thereof,' Zech. v. 4. Is it not of sad consequence to live in a profane perjured family, when the sin of the governor pulls his house about his ears? If the stones and timber be destroyed, how shall the servant escape? And suppose God send not a temporal roll of curses in the family, there is a spiritual roll, and that is worse, Prov. iii. 33. Be not con-

tent to live where religion dies. ‘Salute the brethren, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house,’ Col. iv. 15. The house of the godly is a little church, the house of the wicked a little hell, Prov. vii. 27. Oh, incorporate yourselves into a religious family; the house of a good man is perfumed with a blessing, Prov. iii. 33. When the holy oil of grace is poured on the head, the favour of this ointment sweetly diffuseth itself, and the virtue of it runs down upon the skirts of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. Seneca said to his sister, though I leave you not wealth, yet I leave you a good example. Let us ingraft ourselves among the saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

*Caution 3.* The third caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content ourselves with a little grace. Grace is the best blessing. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Christ’s ascension to heaven, to give gifts; and the end of those gifts ‘that we may grow up into him who is the Head, Christ,’ Eph. iv. 15. Where the apostle distinguisheth between our being in Christ, and our growing in him; our ingrafting and our flourishing: be not content with amodicum in religion.

It is not enough that there be life, but there must be fruit. Barrenness (in the law) was accounted a curse. The farther we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing, Heb. vi. 8. It is a sad thing when men are fruitful only in the unfruitful works of darkness. Be not content with a drachm or two of grace; next to a still-born, a starveling in Christ is worst. Oh covet more grace; never think thou hast enough; we are bid ‘to covet the best things,’ 1 Cor. xii. 31. It is an heavenly ambition, when we desire to be high in God’s favour; a blessed contention, when all the strife is, who shall be most holy. St. Paul, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not a little grace; ‘he reached forward, and pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,’ Phil. iii. 13, 14. A true Christian is a wonder, he is the most contented, and yet the least satisfied; he is contented with a morsel of bread, and a little water in the cruse, yet never satisfied with grace; he doth pant and breathe after more; this is his prayer, Lord, more conformity to Christ, more communion with Christ; he would fain have Christ’s image more lively pictured upon his soul. True grace is always progressive; as the saints are called lamps and stars, in regard of their light; so trees of righteousness (Isa. lxi. 3.) for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth several sorts of fruit.

A true Christian grows, 1. In beauty. Grace is the best complection of the soul ; it is at the first plantation, like Rachel, fair to look upon ; but still the more it lives, the more it sends forth its rays of beauty. Abraham's faith was at first beautiful ; but at last did shine in its orient colours, and grew so illustrious, that God himself was in love with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers.

2. A true Christian grows in sweetness. A poisonous weed may grow as much as the hyssop or rosemary, the poppy in the field, as the corn ; the crab as the pearmain, but the one hath a harsh sour taste, the other mellows as it grows ; an hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God ; he may pray as much, profess as much : but he grows only in magnitude, he brings forth only four grapes, his duties are leavened with pride ; the other ripens as he grows : he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrant and perfume.

3. A true Christian grows in strength : he grows still more rooted and settled. The more the tree grows, the more it spreads its root in the earth ; a Christian who hath a plant of the heavenly Jerusalem, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Christ, and sucks spiritual juice and sap from him ; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a giant in regard of strength. He is strong to do duties, to bear burdens, resist temptations.

4. He grows in the exercise of his grace ; he hath not only oil in his lamps, but his lamps are burning and shining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Christ's vines do flourish, Cant. vi. 11. hence we read of a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. and a fervent love, 1 Pet. i. 21. here is the activity of grace. Indeed sometimes grace is a sleepy habit of the soul, like sap in the vine, not exerting its vigour, which may be occasioned through spiritual sloth, or by reason of falling into some sin ; but this is only for a while ; the spring of grace will come, ' the flowers will appear, and the fig-tree put forth her green figs.' The fresh gales of the Spirit do sweetly revive and reconstitute grace. The church of Christ, whose heart was a garden, and her graces as precious spices, prays for the heavenly breathings of the Spirit that her sacred spices might flow out, Cant. vi. 16.

1. A true Christian grows *incremento*, both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his spiritual living he gets an augmentation : he adds to ' faith, virtue : to virtue, knowledge : to knowledge, temperance,' &c. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. Here is grace growing in its kind ; and he goes on ' from faith to faith,' Rom. i. 17. there is grace growing in the decree, ' we are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly,' 2 Thess. i. 2. It increaseth over and above.

And the apostle speaks of those spiritual plants which were laden with gospel fruit, Phil. i. 2. A Christian is compared to the vine, (an emblem of fruitfulness) he must bear full clusters : we are bid to perfect that which is lacking in our faith, 1 Thess. iii. 10. A Christian must never be so old as to be past bearing ; he brings forth fruit in his old age, Ps. xcii. 14. An heaven-born plant is ever growing ; he never thinks he grows enough ; he is not content unless he adds every day one cubit to his spiritual stature. We must not be content just with so much grace as will keep life and soul together, a drachm or two will not suffice, but we must be still increasing, ‘ with the increase of God,’ Col. ii. 9. We had need renew our strength as the eagle, Isa. xl. 21. Our sins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our temptations are renewed, and shall not our strength be renewed ? O be not content with the first embryo of grace, grace in its infancy and minority. You look for degrees of glory ; be you Christians of degrees. Though a believer should be contented with a modicum in his estate, yet not with a modicum in religion. A Christian of the right breed labours still to excel himself, and come nearer to that holiness in God, who is the original, the pattern and prototype of all holiness.

CHAP. XIII. *Use 4. Shewing how a Christian may know whether he hath learned this divine art.*

Thus having laid down these three cautions, I proceed in the next place to an use of trial. 4. How may a Christian know that he hath learned this lesson of contentment ? I shall lay down some characters by which you shall know it.

*Character 1.* A contented spirit is a silent spirit, he hath not one word to say against God, ‘ I was dumb or silent, because thou, Lord, didst it,’ Psal. xxxix. Contentment silenceth all dispute, ‘ he sitteth alone and keepeth silence,’ Lam. iii. 28. There is a sinful silence, when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded, and men hold their peace ; this silence is a loud sin : and there is a holy silence, when the soul sits down quiet and content with its condition. When Samuel tells Eli that heavy message from God, ‘ that he would judge his house, and that the iniquity of his family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever,’ 1 Sam. iii. 13. Doth Eli murmur or dispute ? No, he hath not one word to say against God ; ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,’ ver. 18. A discontented spirit saith as Pharaoh, ‘ Who is the Lord ?’ Why should I suffer all this ? Why should I be brought into this low condition ? ‘ Who is the Lord ?’ But a gracious heart saith, as Eli, ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what he will with me.’ When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron had offered up strange fire, and fire went from the Lord and devoured them, Lev. x. 1. Is Aaron now in a passion of discontent ? No, Aaron held



his peace, ver. 3. A contented spirit is never angry, unless with himself, for having hard thoughts of God. When Jonah said, 'I do well to be angry;' this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a prophet.

*Character 2.* A contented spirit, is a cheerful spirit; the Greeks call it *euthema*. Contentment is something more than patience; for patience denotes only submission, contentment denotes cheerfulness. A contented Christian is more than passive; he doth not only bear the cross, but take up the cross, Matth. vi. 24. He looks upon God as a wise God; and whatever he doth, though it be not willingly, yet sensibly, it is in order to a cure. Hence the contented Christian is cheerful, and with the apostle, 'takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses,' &c. 2 Cor. xii. 10. He doth not only submit to God's dealings, but rejoice in them; he doth not only say, 'Just is the Lord in all that hath befallen me;' but 'good is the Lord.' This is to be contented. A sullen melancholy is hateful; it is said, 'God loves a cheerful giver,' 2 Cor. ix. 7. ay, and God loves a cheerful liver. We are bid in scripture, 'not to be careful,' but we are not bid not to be cheerful. He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart, Matthew ix. 2.

*Character 3.* A contented spirit is a thankful spirit. This is a degree above the other; 'In every thing give thanks,' 1 Thes. v. 15. A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath his heart screwed up to thankfulness; others will bless God for prosperity, he blesteth him for affliction. Thus he reasons with himself; Am I in want? God sees it better for me to want than to abound; God is now dieting of me, he sees it better for my spiritual health sometimes to be kept fasting: therefore he doth not only submit but is thankful. The malcontent is ever complaining of his condition: the contented spirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a temple where the praises of God are sung forth, not a sepulchre wherein they are buried. A contented Christian in the greatest straits hath his heart enlarged, and dilated in thankfulness, he oft contemplates God's love in election; he sees that he is a monument of mercy, therefore desires to be a pattern of praise. There is always gratulatory music in a contented soul: the Spirit of grace works in the heart like new wine, which under the heaviest pressures of sorrow will have a vent open for thankfulness: this is to be content.

*Character 4.* He that is content, no condition comes amiss to him; so it is in the text, 'in whatever state I am.' A contented Christian can turn himself to any thing; either want or

abound. The people of Israel knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want : when they were in want, they murmured ; ‘ Can God prepare a table in the wilderness ? ’ And when they ate, and were filled, then they lifted up the heel. Paul knew how to manage every state ; he could be either a note higher or lower ; he was, in this sense, an universalist ; he could do any thing that God would have him : if he were in prosperity, he knew how to be thankful ; if in adversity, he knew how to be patient ; he was neither lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other. He could carry a greater sail, or a lesser. Thus a contented Christian knows how to turn himself to any condition. We have those who can be contented in some condition, but not in every estate : they can be content in a wealthy estate, when they have the streams of milk and honey ; while God’s candle shines upon their head, now they are content ; but if the wind turn and be against them, now they are discontented. While they have a silver crutch to lean upon, they are contented ; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are discontented. But Paul had learned in every estate to carry himself with equanimity of mind ; others could be content with their affliction, so God would give them leave to pick and choose. They could be content to bear such a cross ; they could better endure sickness than poverty, or bear loss of estate than loss of children ; if they might have such a man’s cross they could be content. A contented Christian doth not go to choose his cross, but leaves God to choose for him ; he is content both for the kind and the duration. A contented spirit saith, let God apply what medicine he pleaseth, and let it lie on as long as it will ; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venom of sin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented Christian, being sweetly captivated under the authority of the word, desires to be wholly at God’s disposal, and is willing to live in that sphere and climate where God has set him : And if at any time he hath been an instrument of doing noble and brave service in the public, he knows he is but a rational tool, a servant to authority, and is content to return to his former condition of life. Cincinnatus, after he had done worthily, and purchased to himself great fame in his dictatorship, did, notwithstanding, afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure his four acres of ground : thus should it be with Christians, professing godliness with contentment, having served Mars, daring to offend Jupiter ; lest otherwise they discover only to the world a brutish valour, being so untamed and head-strong, that when they had conquered others, yet they are not able to rule their own spirits.

*Characier 5.* He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not turn himself into sin. I deny

not but a Christian may lawfully seek to change his condition : so far as God's providence doth go before, he may follow : but when men will not follow providence, but run before it, as he that said, ' This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer ? ' 2 Kings iv. 33. If God doth not open the door of his providence, they will break it open, and wind themselves out of affliction by sin ; bringing their souls into trouble.—' This is far from holy contentation ; this is unbelief broken into rebellion. A contented Christian is willing to wait God's leisure, and will not stir till God open a door. As Paul said in another case, ' they have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and now, do they thrust us out privily ? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out,' Acts xvi. 37. So, with reverence, saith the contented Christian, God hath cast me into this condition ; and though it be sad and troublesome, yet I will not stir, till God by a clear providence fetch me out. Thus those brave spirited Christians, Heb. xi. 35. ' They accepted not deliverance,' that is, upon base dishonourable terms. ' They would rather stay in prison than purchase their liberty by carnal compliance. Eftius observes on the place, " they might not only have had their enlargements, but been raised to honour, and put into offices of trust ; yet the honour of religion was dearer to them than either liberty or honour." A contented Christian will not remove, till, as the Israelites, he see a pillar of cloud and fire going before him. ' It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord,' Lam. iii. 16. It is good to stay God's leisure, and not to extricate ourselves out of trouble, till we see the star of God's providence pointing out a way to us.

CHAP. XIV. *Use 5. Containing a Christian directory, or rules about contentment.*

I proceed now to an use of direction, to shew Christians how they may attain to this divine art of contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of God's saints have reached to it. St. Paul here had it ; and what do we think of those we read of in that little book of martyrs, Heb. xi. who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, who wandered about in deserts and caves, yet were contented ; so that it is possible to be had. And here I shall lay down some rules for holy contentment.

§ 1. *Advance faith.*

All our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief. It is this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. O set faith a-work ; it is the property of faith to silence our doubtings, to scatter our fears, to still the heart when the passions are up. Faith works the heart to a sweet, serene composure ; it is not having food and raiment, but having faith, which will

make us content. Faith chides down passion; when reason begins to sink, let faith swim.

Qu. *How doth faith work contentment?*

Ans. 1. Faith shews the soul, that whatever its trials are, yet it is from the hand of a father; it is indeed a bitter cup, but 'shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me to drink?' It is in love to my soul: God corrects me with the same love he crowns me: God is now training me up for heaven; he carves me, to make me a polished shaft. These sufferings bring forth patience, humility, even the peaceable fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11. And if God can bring such a sweet fruit out of a sour stock, let him graft me where he pleases. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment.

2. Faith sucks the honey of contentment out of the hive of the promise. Christ is the vine, the promises are the clusters of grapes that grow upon this vine; and faith presseth the sweet wine of contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the promises. I will shew you but one cluster, 'the Lord will give grace and glory,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Here is enough for faith to live upon. The promise is the flower out of which faith distills the spirits and quintessence of divine contentment. In a word, faith carries up the soul, and makes it aspire after more generous and noble delights than the earth affords, and to live in the world above the world. Would ye live contented lives? Live up to the height of your faith.

§ 2. Rule 2. *Labour for assurance.*

Oh let us get the interest cleared between God and our souls. Interest is a word much in use, a pleasing word; interest in great friends, interest-money. Oh, if there be an interest worth looking after, it is an interest between God and the soul: labour to say, 'my God.' To be without money, and without friends, and without God too, Eph. ii. 12. is sad; but he whose faith doth flourish into assurance, that can say, 'I know in whom I have believed,' as St. Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. that man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a man's debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of being arrested, what contentment is this! Oh, let your title be cleared; if God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Christ the bread of life. Am I under defilement? His blood is like the trees of the sanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine, Ezek. xlvii. 12. If any thing in the world be worth labouring for, it is to get sound evidences that God is ours. If this be once cleared, what can come amiss? No matter what storms I meet with, so that I know where to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is so well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing else. To

rest in a condition where a Christian cannot say God is his God, is matter of fear ; and if he can say so truly, and yet is not contented, is matter of shame. ‘ David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,’ 1 Sam. xxx. 6. It was sad with him, Ziklag burnt, his wives taken captive, he lost all, and like to have lost his soldier’s hearts too, (for they spake of stoning him,) yet he had the ground of contentment within him, viz. an interest in God ; and this was a pillar of supportment to his spirit. He that knows God is his, and all that is in God is for his good ; if this doth not satisfy, I know of nothing that will.

§ 3. Rule 3. *Get an humble spirit.*

The humble man is the contented man ; if his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate ; therefore be content. If his esteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himself, than others can have of him. The humble man studies his own unworthiness ; he looks upon himself as ‘ less than the least of God’s mercies,’ Gen. xxxiii. 10. and then a little will content him : he cries out with Paul, that ‘ he is the chief of sinners,’ 1 Tim. i. 15. therefore doth not murmur, but admire : he doth not say his comforts are small, but his sins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore he is contented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself : he knows the worst piece God cuts him, is better than he deserves. A proud man is never contented ; he is one that hath an high opinion of himself ; therefore under small blessings is disdainful, under small crosses impatient. The humble spirit is the contented spirit ; if his cross be light, he reckons it the inventory of his mercies ; if it be heavy, yet he takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his estate is worse, it is to make him the better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, contentment will be the superstructure.

§ 4. Rule 4. *Keep a clear conscience.*

Contentment is the manna that is laid up in the ark of a good conscience : Oh take heed of indulging any sin. It is as natural for guilt to breed disquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermin. Sin lies as Jonah in the ship, it raiseth a tempest. If dust or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cause a forenesh in it ; if the eye be clear, then it is free from that forenesh : if sin be gotten into the conscience, which is as the eye of the soul, then grief and disquiet breed there ; but keep the eye of conscience clear, and all is well. What Solomon saith of a good stomach, I may say of a good conscience, Prov. xxvii. 7. ‘ To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet :’ so to a good conscience every bitter thing is sweet ; it can pick contentment out of a cross. A good con-

science turns the waters of Marah into wine. Would you have a quiet heart? Get a smiling conscience. I wonder not to hear Paul say, he was in every state content; when he could make that triumph, 'I have lived in all good conscience to this day.' When once a man's reckonings are clear, it must needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. A good conscience can suck contentment out of the bitterest drug, under slanders; 'this is our rejoicing the testimony of our conscience,' 2 Cor. i. 17. In case of imprisonment, Paul had his prison-songs, and could play the sweet lessons of contentment when his feet were in the stocks, Acts xvi. 25. Augustine calls it 'the paradise of a good conscience;' and if it be so, then in prison we may be in paradise. When the times are troublesome, a good conscience makes a calm; if conscience be clear, what though the days be cloudy? Is it not a contentment to have a friend always by, to speak a good word for us? Such a friend is conscience. A good conscience, as David's harp, driveth away the evil spirit of discontent. When thoughts begin to arise, and the heart is disquieted, conscience saith to a man, as the king did to Nehemiah, 'Why is thy countenance sad?' Nehem. ii. 2. So saith conscience, Hast not thou the seed of God in thee? Art not thou an heir of the promise? Hast not thou a treasure that thou canst never be plundered of? Why is thy countenance sad? Oh, keep conscience clear, and you shall never want contentment. For a man to keep the pipes of his body, the veins and arteries free from colds and obstructions, is the best way to maintain health; so, to keep conscience clear, and to preserve it from the obstructions of guilt, is the best way to maintain contentment. First, conscience is pure, and then peaceable.

§ 5. Rule 5. *Learn to deny yourselves.*

Look well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things, (1.) Mortify your desires. (2.) Moderate your delights.

1. Mortify your desires. We must not be of the dragon's temper, who, they say, is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst; 'mortify therefore your inordinate affections,' Col. iii. 5. In the Greek it is, your evil affections; to shew that our desires, when they are inordinate, are evil; crucify your desires, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

Qu. *How should a Christian martyr his desires.*

Ans. 1. Get a right judgment of the things here below; they are mean beggarly things; 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' Prov. xiii. 5. The appetite must be guided by reason; the affections are the feet of the soul, therefore they must follow the judgment, not lead it.

2. Often seriously meditate of mortality; death will soon crop these flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabric of those bodies which we so garnish and beautify. Think,

when you are locking up your money in your chest, who shall shall shortly lock you up in your coffin.

2dly, Moderate your delights. Set not your heart too much upon any creature, Isa. lxii. 10. What we over-love, we shall over-grieve. Rachel set her heart too much upon her children, and when she had lost them, she lost herself too : such a vein of grief was opened, as could not be stetched, ' she refused to be comforted.' Here was discontent. When we let any creature lie too near our heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our heart is rent away with it. Too much fondness ends in frowardness. Those that would be content in the want of mercy, must be moderate in the enjoyment. Jonathan dipt the rod in honey, he did not thrust it in. Let us take heed of ingulphing ourselves in pleasure ; better have a spare diet, than, by having too much to surfeit.

§ 6. Rule 6. *Get much of heaven into your heart.*

Spiritual things satisfy ; the more of heaven is in us, the less earth will content. He that hath once tasted the love of God, Psal. lxiii. 5. his thirst is much quenched towards sublunary things : the joys of God's Spirit are heart-filling and heart-cheering joys ; he that hath these, hath heaven begun in them, Rom. xiv. 27. And shall not we be content to be in heaven ? Oh get a sublime heart, ' seek the things that are above,' Col. iii. 1. Fly aloft in your affections, thirst after the graces and comforts of the Spirit ; the eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the sting of the serpent ; the serpent creeps on his belly, and stings only such creatures as go upon the earth.

§ 7. Rule 7. *Look not so much on the dark side of your condition, as on the light.*

God doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its light side and dark : look on the light side of thy estate ; who looks on the black side of a landscape ? Suppose thou art cast in a law-suit, there is the dark side ; yet thou hast some land left, there is the light side. Thou hast sickness in thy body, there is the dark side : but grace in thy soul, there is the light side. Thou hast a child taken away, there is the dark side ; thy husband lives, there is the light side. God's providences in this life are variously represented by these speckled horses among the myrtle trees, which were red and white, Zech. i. 1. Mercies and afflictions are interwoven ; God doth speckle his work. Oh, saith one, I want such a comfort ? But weigh all thy mercies in the balance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be so discontented for the loss of that, as not to be thankful for all the other parts and joints of his body ? Look on the light side of your condition, and then all your discontents will easily disband : do not pore upon your losses, but ponder upon your mercies.

What! wouldest thou have no cross at all? Why should one man think to have all good things, when himself is good but in part? Wouldest thou have no evil about thee, who hast so much evil in thee? Thou art not fully sanctified in this life, how then thinkest thou to be fully satisfied? Never look for perfection of contentment, till there be perfection of grace.

§ 8. Rule 8. *Consider in what a posture we stand here in the world.*

1. We are in a military condition, we are soldiers, 2 Tim. ii. 5. Now a soldier is content with any thing; what though he hath not his stately house, his rich furniture, his soft bed, his full table, yet he doth not complain: He can lie on straw as well as down; he minds not his lodging, but his thoughts run upon dividing the spoil, and the garland of honour shall be set upon his head; and for hope of this is content to run any hazard, endure any hardship. Were it not absurd to hear him complain, that he wants such provision, and is fain to lie out in the fields? A Christian is a military person, he fights the Lord's battles, he is Christ's ensign-bearer. Now, what though he endures hard fate, and the bullets fly about? He fights for a crown, and therefore must be content.

2. We are in a peregrine condition, pilgrims and travellers. A man that is in a strange country, is contented with any diet or usage, he is glad of any thing; though he hath not that respect or attendance which he looks for at home, nor is capable of the privileges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows, when he comes into his own country, he hath lands to inherit, and there he shall have honour and respect: so it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim condition; 'I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were,' Psal. xxxix. 12. Therefore let a Christian be content; he is in the world, but not of the world; he is born of God, and is a citizen of the New Jerusalem, Heb. xii. 10. therefore, though 'he hunger and thirst, and have no certain dwelling place,' 1 Cor. iv. 11. yet he must be content: it will be better when he comes into his own country.

3. We are in a mendicant condition; we are beggars, we beg at heaven's gate, 'give us this day our daily bread:' We live upon God's alms, therefore must be content with any thing; a beggar must not pick and choose, he is contented with the refuse. Oh, why dost thou murmur that art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms-basket of God's providence.

§ 9. Rule 9. *Let not your hope depend upon these outward things.*

Lean not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comfort upon such a friend or estate; and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our hearts begin either to frail or fret. A lame



man leans on his crutches; and if they break, he is undone. Let not thy contentment go upon crutches, which may soon fail; the ground of contentment must be within thyself. The Greek word *autarkeia*, which is used for contentment, signifies self-sufficiency. A Christian hath that from within that is able to support him; that strength of faith, and good hope through grace, as bears up his heart in the deficiency of outward comforts. The philosophers of old, when their estates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, learning and virtue; and shall not a believer much more in the graces of the spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the soul? Say with thyself, if friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within which comforts me, viz. an heavenly treasure: when the blossoms of my estate are blown off, still there is the sap of contentment in the root of my heart; I have still an interest in God, and that interest cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in these dull and beggarly things here below.

§ 10. Rule 10. *Let us often compare our condition.*

*Qu. How should I compare?*

*Ans.* Make this five-fold comparison.

*Comparison 1.* Let us compare our condition and our desert together; if we have not what we desire, we have more than we deserve. For our mercies we have deserved loss; for our afflictions, we have deserved more.

*First,* In regard of our mercies, we have deserved loss. What can we deserve? Can man be profitable to the Almighty? We live upon free grace. Alexander gave a great gift to one of his subjects; the man being much taken with it, this (saith he) is more than I am worthy of. I do not give thee this, saith the king, because thou art worthy of it, but I give a gift like Alexander. Whatever we have is not merit, but bounty; the least bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our salvation; he that hath the least mercy, will die in God's debt.

*Secondly,* In regard of our afflictions, we have deserved more. 'Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,' Ezra ix. 13. Is our condition sad? We have deserved it should be worse; hath God taken away our estate from us? He might have taken away Christ from us: hath he thrown us into prison? he might have thrown us into hell, he might as well damn us, as whip us; this should make us contented.

*Comparison 2.* Let us compare our condition with others? and this will make us content: we look at them who are above us, let us look at them who are below us; we see one in his silks, another in his sack-cloth: one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickness, but want

hath brought into a consumption ! Think of this and be content. It is worse with them who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in God's favour. Am I in prison ? Was not Daniel in a worse place, viz. the lion's den ? Do I live in a mean cottage ? Look on them who are banished from their houses. We read of the primitive saints, ' that they wandered up and down in sheeps' skins and goats' skins, of whom the world was not worthy,' Heb. xi. 37. Hast thou a gentle fit of an ague ? Look on them who are tormented with the stone and gout, &c. Others of God's children have had greater afflictions, and have borne them better than we. Daniel fed upon pulse and drank water, yet was fairer than they who ate of the king's portion, Dan. i. 15. Some Christians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulse and water, have looked better, viz. been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoice in affliction, and do we repine ? Can they take up their cross, and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter cross murmur ?

*Comparison 3.* Let us compare our condition with Christ's upon earth ; what a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us ? He was contented with any thing. ' For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,' 2 Cor. vii. 9. He could have brought down an house from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth ; but he was contented to be in the wine-press, that we might be in the wine-cellar ; and to live poor, that we might be rich ; the manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy : he who is now preparing mansions for us in heaven, had none for himself on earth, ' he had no where to lay his head.' Christ came in *forma pauperis* ; who ' being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7. We read not of any sums of money he had ; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it, Mat. xvii. 27. Jesus Christ was in a low condition, he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the cross, and that was his humility ; he was content to live poor, and die cursed. O compare your condition with Christ's.

*Comparison 4.* Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content.

*First,* Let us compare our spiritual estate with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood ? We were heirs apparent to hell, having no right to pluck one leaf from the tree of the promise ; it was a Christless and hopeless condition, Eph. ii. 12. But now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation ; he hath taken you out of the wild olive of nature, and ingrafted you into Christ, making you living branches of that living vine ; he hath not only caused the light to shine

upon you, but into you, 2 Cor. vi. 6. and hath interested you in all the privileges of sonship; is not here that which may make the soul content.

*Secondly*, Let us compare our temporal estate with what it was once: Alas, we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; 'For we brought nothing with us into the world,' 1 Tim. vi. 7. If we have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (but sin); other creatures bring something with them into the world; the lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, &c. but we brought nothing with us. What if our condition at present be low? It is better than it was once; therefore, having food and raiment, let us be content: whatever we have, God's providence fetcheth it in to us; and if we lose all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was that made Job content, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb,' Job i. 21. As if he had said, though God hath taken away all from me, yet why should I murmur? I am as rich as I was when I came into the world: I have as much left as I brought with me; naked came I hither: therefore blessed be the name of the Lord.

*Comparison 5.* Let us compare our condition with what it shall be shortly. There is a time shortly coming, when, if we had all the riches of India, they would do us no good; we must die, and can carry nothing with us; so saith the apostle, 'it is certain we can carry nothing out of the world,' 1 Tim. vi. 7. Therefore it follows, 'having food and raiment, let us therewith be content,' ver. 8. Open the rich man's grave, and see what is there; you may find the miser's bones but not his riches, says Bede. Were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented, when we look upon our empty bags; but it is not so; God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us: and when we die, we cannot carry our estate with us: honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our onward condition? Why do we disguise ourselves with discontent? Oh, lay up a stock of grace; be rich in faith and good works, these riches will follow us, Rev. xiv. 13. No other coin but grace will pass current in heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to be rich toward God, Luke xii. 21. And as for other things, be not solicitous, 'we shall carry nothing with us.'

§ 11. Rule 11. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.*

The way for a Christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower; not by making his barns wider, but his heart narrower. One man, a whole

lordship or manor will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land: what is the difference? The one studies to satisfy curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may have, the other what he may spare.

§ 12. Rule 12. *Study the vanity of the creature.*

It matters not whether we have less or more of these things, they have vanity written upon the frontispiece of them; the world is like a shadow that declineth; it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we have most need of it. All the world rings changes, and is constant only in its disappointments; what then, if we have less of that which is at best but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of mutation as motion; and what if God cut us short in sublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to ice, which is smooth, but slippery: or to the Egyptian temples, without very beautiful and sumptuous, but within nothing to be seen but the image of an ape; every creature faith concerning satisfaction, it is not in me. The world is not a filling but a flying comfort. It is like a game at tennis; providence bandies her golden balls, first to one, then to another. Why are we discontented at the loss of these things, but because we expect that from them which is not, and repose that in them which we ought not? Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd, Jonah iv. 6. What a vanity was it? Is it much to see a withering gourd smitten? or to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure.

§ 13. Rule 13. *Get fancy regulated.*

It is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth; what is the reason one tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one shilling? Fancy raiseth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real; so, why it should be better to have thousands than hundreds, is, because men fancy it so; if we could fancy a lower condition better, as having less care in it, and less account, it would be far more eligible; the water that springs out of the rock, drinks as sweet as if it came out of a golden chalice: things are as we fancy them. Ever since the fall, the fancy is distempered; 'God saw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil,' Gen. vi. 5. Fancy looks through wrong spectacles; pray that God will sanctify your fancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were set right. Diogenes preferred his cynical life before Alexander's royalty; he fancied his little cloister best. Fabricus, tho' a poor man, yet despised the gold of king Pyrrhus. Could we cure a distempered fancy, we might soon conquer a discontented heart.

§ 14. Rule 14. *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

The body is but a small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray for our daily bread ; nature is content with a little. Not to thirst, not to starve, is enough, saith Gregory Nazianzen ; meat and drink are a Christian's riches, saith St. Hierom ; and the apostle saith, ' having food and raiment, let us be content.' The stomach is sooner filled than the eye ; how quickly would a man be content, if he would study rather to satisfy his hunger than his humour.

§ 15. Rule 15. *Believe the present condition is best for us.*

Flesh and blood is not a competent judge. Surfeiting stomachs are for banqueting stuff ; but a man that regards his health, is rather for solid food. Vain men fancy such a condition best, and would flourish in their bravery ; whereas a wise Christian hath his will melted into God's will, and thinks it best to be at his finding ; God is wise, he knows whether we need food or physic : and if we could acquiesce in providence, the quarrel would soon be at an end. Oh, what a strange creature would man be if he were what he could wish himself ? Be content to be at God's allowance ; God knows which is the fittest pasture to put his sheep in : sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank pasture may rot. Do I meet with such a cross ? God shews me what the world is : he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a step-mother. Doth God stint me in my allowance ? He is now dieting me. Do I meet with losses ? It is that God may keep me from being lost. Every cross wind shall at last blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition best which God doth parcel out to us, we should cheerfully submit, and say, ' The lines are fallen in pleasant places.'

§ 16. Rule 16. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.*

We have taken an oath in baptism to forsake the flesh. The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil, it is a bosom-traitor ; an enemy within is worst. If there were no devil to tempt, the flesh would be another Eve to tempt to the forbidden fruit. Oh, take heed of giving way to it ; whence is all our discontent but from the fleshly part ? The flesh puts us upon the immoderate pursuit of the world : it consults for ease and plenty, and if it be not satisfied, then discontent begin to arise. Oh, let it not have the reins : martyr the flesh. In spiritual things the flesh is a sluggard, in secular things an horse-leech, crying, ' give, give.' The flesh is an enemy to suffering ; it will sooner make a man a courtier, than a martyr. Oh, keep it under ; put its neck under Christ's yoke, stretch and nail it to his cross ; never let a Christian look for contentment in his spirit, till there be confinement in his flesh.

§ 17. Rule 17. *Meditate much on the glory which shall be revealed.*

There are great things laid up in heaven. Though it be sad for the present, let us be content, in that it shortly will be better ; it is but a while and we shall be with Christ, bathing ourselves in the fountain of love ; we shall never complain of wants and injuries any more ; our cross may be heavy, but one sight of Christ will make us forget all our former sorrows. There are two things should give contentment.

1. That God will make us able to bear our troubles, 1 Cor. x. 13. God (saith Chrysostom) doth like a lutanist, who will not let the strings of his lute be too slack lest it spoil the music of prayer and repentance ; nor yet too much adversity, ' lest the spirit fail before me ; and the souls that I have made,' Isa. lvii. 16.

2. When we have suffered a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. we shall be perfected in glory ; the cross shall be our ladder, by which we shall climb up to heaven. Be then content and then the scene will alter : God will ere long turn our water into wine : the hope of this is enough to drive away all distempers from the heart. Blessed be God it will be better ; ' We have no continuing city here,' Heb. xiii. therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wise man looks still to the end ; ' the end of the just man is peace,' Ps. xxxvii. 7. Methinks the smoothness of the end should make amends for the ruggedness of the way. O eternity, eternity ! Think often of the kingdom prepared. David was advanced from the field to the throne ; first he held his shepherds staff, and shortly after the royal sceptre. God's people may be put to hard services here, but God hath chosen them to be kings, to sit upon the throne with the Lord Jesus. ' This being weighed in the balance of faith, would be an excellent means to bring the heart to contentment.

§ 18. Rule 18. *Be much in prayer.*

The last rule for contentment is, be much in prayer. Beg of God, that he will work our hearts to this blessed frame ; ' Is any man afflicted, let him pray,' James v. 14. So, is anyman discontented ? Let him pray. Prayer gives vent ; the opening of a vein lets out bad blood ; when the heart is filled with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out bad blood. The key of prayer oiled with tears, unlocks the heart of all its discontents. Prayer is an holy spell or charm to drive away trouble ; prayer is the unbofoming of the soul, the unloading of all our cares in God's breast ; and this utters in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend we find our minds finely eased and quieted. It is not our strong resolutions, but our strong requests to God, which must give the heart ease in trouble ; by prayer the strength of Christ comes into the soul ; and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. Paul could be in every cistate content ;

but that you may not think he is able to do this himself, he tells you, that though he could want and abound, and 'do all things;' yet it was 'through Christ strengthening him,' Phil. iv. 13. It is the child that writes, but it is the scrivener guides his hand.

CHAP. XV. Use 6. *Of consolation to the contented Christian.*

The last use is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented Christian. If there be an heaven upon earth thou hast it. O Christian, thou mayest insult over thy troubles, and, with the leviathan, 'laugh at the shaking of a spear,' Job xiv. 29. What shall I say? Thou art a crown to thy profession; thou dost hold it out to all the world, that there is virtue enough in religion to give the soul contentment. Thou shewest the highest of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much for us to be content: but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses, temptations, agonies; now to be content, this is a glorious thing indeed.

To a contented Christian, I shall say two things for a farewell.

*First*, God is exceedingly taken with such a frame of heart. God saith of a contented Christian, as David once said of Goliath's sword, 'there is none like that, give it me,' 1 Sam. xxi. 9. If you would please God, and be men of his heart, be contented. God hates a froward spirit.

*Secondly*, The contented Christian shall be no loser. What lost Job by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What lost Abraham by his contentment? He was content to leave his country at God's call: The Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be his God, Gen. xvii. He changeth his name; no more Abram, but Abraham, the father of many nations. God makes his seed as the stars of heaven; nay, honours them with this title, 'the father of the faithful,' Gen. xviii. 17. The Lord makes known his secrets to him, 'shall I hide from Abraham the things that I will do?' God settles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of heaven, and afterwards translated him to the blessed paradise. God will be sure to reward the contented Christian. As our Saviour said in another case to Nathaniel, 'because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these,' John i. 50. So I say, Art thou contented, O Christian, with a little? Thou shalt see greater things than these: God will distil the sweet influences of his love into thy soul: he will raise thee up friends; he will bless the oil in the cruse? and when that is done, he will crown thee with an eternal enjoyment of himself; he will give thee heaven,

where thou shalt have as much contentment as thy soul can possibly thirst after.

## DIVERS DISCOURSES.

JAMES iii. 6. *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*

THE apostle James, in this scripture, describes the evil of the tongue, 'The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.'

1. 'It is a fire.' It burns with intemperate heat; it causeth the heat of contention; it sets others in a flame.

2. 'A world of iniquity.' It was at first made to be an organ of God's praise, but it is become an instrument of unrighteousness. All the members of the body are sinful, as there is bitterness in every branch of wormwood, but the tongue is excessively sinful, 'full of deadly poison,' verse 8.

*Doctrine.* The tongue, though it be a little member, yet it hath a world of sin in it: the tongue is an unruly evil. I shall shew you some of the evils of the tongue.

1. The evil tongue (travel a little over this world) is the silent tongue; it is wholly mute in matters of religion; it never speaks of God or of heaven, as if it cleaveth to the roof of the mouth. Men are fluent and discursive enough in other things, but in matters of religion their lips are sealed up. If we come in to some peoples' company, we do not know what religion they are of, whether Jews or Mahometans, for they never speak of Christ; they are like the man in the gospel, who was possessed with a dumb devil, Mark ix. 17.

2. The evil tongue is the earthly tongue: men talk of nothing but the world, as if all their hopes were here, and they looked for any earthly eternity; these have earthly minds, John iii. 31. 'He that is of the earth, speaketh of the earth.'

3. The evil tongue is the hasty or angry tongue; they have no command of passions, but are carried away with them, as a chariot with wild horses. I know there is an holy anger, when we are angry with sin: Christ had this anger when they made the temple a place of merchandize, John ii. 15. That anger is without sin, which is against sin: but that is an evil tongue, which is presently blown up into exorbitant passion; this 'tongue is set on fire from hell.' A wrathful spirit is unsuitable to the gospel; it is a gospel of peace, and its author is the Prince of Peace, and it is sealed by the Spirit, who came in the form of a dove, a meek peaceable creature. Thou who art given much to passion, whose tongue is often set on fire, take heed



thou dost not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool thy tongue.

4. The evil tongue is the vain tongue, that vents itself in idle words: Pſal. x. 7. ‘Under his tongue is vanity:’ A vain tongue shews a light heart: a good man’s words are weighty and prudent; his lips are as a tree of life to feed many; his speech is edifying, Prov. x. 20. ‘The tongue of the just is as choice silver.’ But, Prov. xv. 1. ‘The mouth of fools pours out foolishness:’ How many idle away the day of grace in frivolous discourses? A wise man’s words are like gold, weighty, and will sink into the hearts of others; but the words of many are light and feathery; and will make no impression, Mat. xii. 36. ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.’

5. The evil tongue is the censorious tongue. James iv. 12. ‘Who art thou that judgest another?’ Some make it a part of their religion to judge and censure others; they do not imitate their graces, but censure their failings; such an one is an hypocrite; this comes from pride. Were men’s hearts more humble, their tongues would be more charitable. The censurer sits in the chair of pride, and passeth sentence upon another, and doth reprobate him: this is to usurp God’s prerogative, and take his work out of his hands; it is God’s work to judge, not ours. He who spends his time in censuring others, spends but little time in examining himself; he doth not see his own faults. There is not a greater sign of hypocrisy, than to be over hasty in judging and censuring persons.

6. The evil tongue is the slanderous tongue, Pſal. l. 20. ‘Thou fittest and slanderest thy own mother’s son.’ Slandering is when we speak to the prejudice of another, and speak that which is not true. Worth and eminency are commonly blasted by slander; holiness itself is no shield from slander: ‘John Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, yet they say he hath a devil,’ Mat. xi. ‘Come and let us smite him with the tongue.’ A slanderer wounds another’s fame, and no physician can heal these wounds. ‘The sword doth not make so deep a wound as the tongue.’ The Greek word for slanderer, signifies Devil, 1 Tim. iii. 11. Some think it is no great matter to belie and defame another; but know this is to act the part of a devil. The slanderer’s tongue is a two-edged sword, it wounds two at once; while the slanderer wounds another in his name, he wounds himself in his conscience. This is contrary to scripture, James iv. 11. ‘Speak not evil one of another.’ God takes this ill at our hands, to speak evil of others, especially such as are eminently holy, and help to bear up the honour of religion, Numb. xii. 8. ‘Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?’ What, my servant, who hath wrought so

many miracles, whom I have spoken with in the mount face to face, were not ye afraid to speak against him? So will God say, Take heed of this, it is a sin our nature is very prone to; and remember, it is no less sin to rob another of his good name, than to steal his goods or wares out of his shop.

7. The evil tongue is the unclean tongue, that vents itself in filthy and scurrilous words. Ephes. iv. 29. 'Let no corrupt communications proceed out of your mouth.' A sign of a great distemper, that the fever is high, when the tongue is black: a sign men's hearts are very evil when such black words come from them.

8. The evil tongue is the lying tongue, Col. iii. 9. 'Lie not one to another.' 'The Cretians were noted for liars.' Tit. i. 12. 'The Cretians are always liars.' It becomes not Christians to be Cretians. Nothing is more contrary to God than a lie; it shews much irreligion: lying is a sin that doth no go alone, it ushers in other sins. Absalom told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron, 2 Sam. xv. 7. and this lie was a preface to his treason. Lying is such a sin, as takes away all society and converse with men: how can you have converse with him, that you cannot trust a word he saith? It is a sin so fordid, that when the liar is convicted, he is ashamed. God's children have this character, they are 'children that will not lie,' Isa. lxiii. 8. the new nature in them will not suffer them. The liar is a near a-kin to the devil, and the devil will shortly claim kindred with him, John viii. 44. 'The devil is a liar, and the father of it.' He seduced our first parents by a lie, Gen. iii. 4. How doth this sin incense God? He struck Ananias dead for telling a lie, Acts v. 5. the furnace of hell is heated to throw liars into, Rev. xxii. 15. 'Without are dogs and forcerers, and whosoever loveth and telleth a lie.'

9. The evil tongue is the flattering tongue, that will speak fair to one's face, but will defame, Prov. xxvi. 25. 'He that hateth, dissembleth with his lips.' When he speaketh fair, believe him not; dissembled love is worse than hatred. Some can commend and reproach, flatter and hate: [honey in their mouths, but a sting of malice in their hearts:] better are the wounds of a friend, than the kisses of such an enemy. Hierom saith, "the Arian faction pretended friendship; they (saith he) kissed my hands, but slandered me and sought my ruin." Many have dissembling tongues, they can say, your servant, and lay snares, Prov. xxix. 5. 'A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth snares for his feet.' You oft think you have a friend in your bosom, but he proves a viper. To dissemble love is no better than to lie: for there is a pretence of that love which is not. Many are like Joab, 2 Sam. xx. 9. 'And Joab said to Amasa, art thou in health, my brother? And he took him

by the beard to kiss him, and he smote him on the fifth rib that he died.' For my part, I must question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. God will bring such an one to shame at last, Prov. xxvi. 26. 'Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.'

10. The evil tongue is the tongue given to boasting, James iii. 5. 'The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.' There is an holy boasting, Ps. xlv. 8. 'In God we boast all the day,' when we triumph in his power and mercy : but it is a sinful boasting, when men display their trophies, boast of their own worth and eminency, that others may admire and cry them up : a man's self is his idol, and he loves to have this idol worshipped, Acts v. 36. 'There arose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody.' 2. Sinful boasting is when men boast of their sins, Ps. lii. 1. 'Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?' Some boast how mighty they have been : how many they have made drunk ; how many they have deflowered ; as if a beggar should boast of his sores ; or a thief boast of being burnt in the hand ; such as boast of their sinful exploits, will have little cause to rejoice or hang up their trophies when they come to hell.

11. The evil tongue is the swearing tongue, Matth. v. 34. 'Swear not at all.' The scripture allows an oath for the ending of a controversy, and to clear the truth, Heb. vi. 16. But in ordinary discourse to use an oath, and so take God's name in vain, is sinful. Swearing may be called the 'unfruitful works of darkness,' there is neither pleasure nor profit in it : It is like an hook the fish comes to without a bait, Jer. xxiii. 10. 'Because of swearing the land mourns.' Some think it the grace of their speech ; but if God will reckon with men for idle words, what will he do for sinful oaths ?

Obj. *But it is only a petty oath, they swear by their faith ?*

Ans. Sure they which have so much faith in their mouth, have none in their heart. But it is my custom. Is this an excuse, or an aggravation of the sin ? If a malefactor should be arraigned for robbing, and he should say to the judge, spare me, it is my custom to rob on the high-way ; the judge would say, thou shalt the rather die. For every oath thou swearest, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial.

Obj. *But, may some think, what though now and then I swear an oath ? Words are but wind.*

Ans. But they are such a wind as will blow thee into hell, without repentance.

12. The railing tongue is an evil tongue : this is a plague-fore breaking out at the tongue : when we give opprobrious language. When the dispute was between the archangel and

the devil about the body of Moses, Jude ver. 9. 'The archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against him, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.' The archangel durst not rail against the devil. Railing oft ends in reviling, and so men bring themselves into a premunire, and are in danger of hell-fire, Matth. v. 22.

13. The seducing tongue is an evil tongue. The tongue that by fine rhetoric decoys men into error, Rom. xvi. 18. 'By fair speeches they deceive the heart of the simple.' A fair tongue can put off bad wares; error is bad ware, which a seducing tongue can put off. The deceit lies in this: a smooth tongue can make error look so like truth, that you can hardly know them asunder: as thus, in justification, Christ bears infinite love to justified persons; this is a glorious truth, but under this notion, the Antinomian preffeth libertinism; believers may take more liberty to sin, and God sees no sin in them. Thus, by crying up justification, they destroy sanctification, here is the seducing tongue: and error is as dangerous as vice: one may die by poison as well as by a pistol.

14. The evil tongue is the cruel tongue, that speaks to the wounding the hearts of others. The tongue is made almost in the fashion of a sword; and the tongue is sharp as a sword, Pl. lvii. 4. 'Their tongue is a sharp sword.' Kind, loving words should be spoken to such as are of a heavy heart, Job vi. 14. 'To him that is afflicted, pity shall be shewn.' Healing words are fittest for a broken heart; but that is a cruel, unmerciful tongue, which speaks such words to the afflicted, as to cut them to the heart, Pl. lxix. 26. 'They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.' Hannah was a woman of a troubled spirit, 1 Sam. i. 10. 'She was in bitterness of soul, and wept sore.' And now Eli, ver. 14. 'Said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.' This word was like pouring vinegar into the wound. When Job was afflicted with God's hand, his friends instead of comforting him, tell him he was an hypocrite, Job xi. 2. These were cutting words, which went to his heart: instead of giving him cordials in his fainting, they use corrosives. This is to lay more weight upon a dying man.

15. The evil tongue is the murmuring tongue, Jude 16. 'These are murmurers.' Murmuring is discontent breaking out at the lips; men quarrel with God and tax his providence, as if he had not dealt well with them. Why should any murmur or be discontented at their condition? Doth God owe them any thing? Or, can they deserve any thing at his hands? Oh, how uncomely is it to murmur at providence? It is fittest for a Cain to be wroth with God, Gen. iii. 6. (1.) Murmuring proceeds from unbelief. When men distrust God's promise, then they

murmur at his providence, Ps. cvi. 24, 25. 'They believed not his word, but murmured.' When faith grows low, then passion grows high. (2.) Murmuring proceeds from pride. Men think they have deserved better; and, because they are crossed, therefore they utter discontented expressions against God. He who is humble bears any thing from God; he knows his punishment is less than his sin, therefore saith, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord,' Mic. vii. 9. But pride raises discontent; and hence comes murmurings. Murmuring is a sin that God cannot bear, Numb. xiv. 27. 'How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?' The murmurer discovers much ingratitude; a murmuring tongue is always an unthankful tongue: he considers not how much he is a debtor to free grace, and whatever he hath is more than God owes him: he considers not that his mercies outweigh his afflictions; there is more honey than wormwood in his cup: he considers not what God hath done for him, more than such as are better than he: he hath the finest of wheat when others feed, as Daniel, on pulse. The murmurer, I say, doth not consider this: but because he is crossed in some small matter, he repines against God. Oh ingratitude! Israel, though they had manna from heaven to satisfy their hunger, angels food; yet murmured for want of quails; not content that God should supply their want, but must satisfy their lust too. Oh unthankful! Israel's murmuring cost many of them their lives, 1 Cor. x. 10. 'Neither murmur ye, as some of them did, and were destroyed of the destroyer.' Their speeches were venomous, and God punished them with venomous serpents.

16. The evil tongue is the scoffing tongue. The scoffer sits in the chair of scorn, and derides religion: surely the devil hath taken great possession of men, when they have arrived at such a degree of sin as to scoff at holiness. It was foretold as a sin of the last times, 2 Pet. iii. 3. 'There shall come in the last days scoffers.' Some scoff at the authority of scripture, the deity of Christ, the immortality of the soul: this is the worst sort of tongues. When men have laid aside the veil of modesty, and their conscience are seared, then they fall a scoffing at religion; and when once they are come to this, their case is desperate; no reproofs will reclaim them: tell them of their sin, and they will hate you the more, Prov. ix. 8. 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.' Such a man is on the threshold of damnation.

17. The evil tongue is the tongue given to cursing, Ps. x. 7. 'His mouth is full of cursing;' a wishing some great evil to befall another: cursing is the scum that boils off from a wicked heart. Though it is true, the curse causeless shall not come; (it is not in man's power to make another cursed), yet to wish

a curse, is a fearful sin. If to hate our brother be murder, 1 John iii. 15. then, to curse him, which is the highest degree of hatred, must needs be murder. To use an execration or curse, is for a man to do what in him lies to damn another. Some with a curse upon themselves: so the Jews, 'his blood be upon us,' &c. And so do your God *damne's*, as if damnation did not come fast enough, Ps. cix. 7. 'As he loved cursing, so let it come to him.'

18. The evil tongue is the unjust tongue; that will for a piece of money open its mouth in a bad cause. The lawyer hath *linguam venalem*, a tongue that will be sold for money, Psalm lxxxii. 2. 'How long will you judge unjustly?' Some will plead any cause, though ever so bad: though it appears the deeds are forged, the witnesses bribed, there is perjury in the cause; yet they will plead it. When a man pleads a bad cause, he is the devil's attorney: as God hates false weights, so a false cause. Better be born dumb, than open one's mouth in a bad cause. Oh, what times are we in! Many pervert justice, and, for enriching themselves, overthrow a righteous cause; these are worse than they that rob; for they fleece mens' estates under colour of law, and ruin them under a pretence of doing justice.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See what a blow we have sustained by the fall; it hath put out of frame the whole course of nature. Original sin hath diffused itself as a poison into all the members of the body: it hath made the eye unchaste, the hands full of bribes; amongst the rest, it hath defiled the tongue; 'it is a world of iniquity.' That which was made to be the organ of God's praise, is become a weapon of unrighteousness.

*Branch 2.* If there be so much evil in the tongue, what is the heart? If the stream be so full of water, how full of water is the fountain? If there be a world of iniquity in the tongue, how many worlds of sin are there in the heart? Psal. v. 9. 'Their inward part is very wickedness.' If the tongue, which is the outward part, be so wicked, the inward part is very wickedness, Psal. lxiv. 6. 'The heart is deep:' it is such a deep as cannot be fathomed; deep pride, hypocrisy, atheism.

The heart is like the sea, where is the leviathan, and creeping things innumerable, Ps. civ. If the skin hath boils of leprosy in it, how much corruption is in the blood? If the tongue be so bad, how diabolical is the heart? It is the heart sets the tongue at work: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' There are the seeds of all atheism and blasphemy, Mat. xv. 9. 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries; these defile a man.' If a branch of wormwood be so bitter, then how bitter is the root? Oh, what a root of bitterness grows in a man's heart! Some say they have good hearts;

but if the tongue be so bad, what is the heart? If I see smoke come out of the top of a chimney, what a fire burns within? Prov. vi. 13, 14. 'A wicked man walketh with a froward mouth; frowardness is in his heart.' Solomon shews the reason why the mouth is so froward, 'Frowardness is in his heart.' The heart is a store-house of wickedness, therefore called the 'evil treasure of the heart,' Matth. xii. 25. Original righteousness was a good treasure, but we were robbed of that; and now there is an evil treasure of sin. The word treasure denotes plenty; to shew the fulness and abundance of sin that is in the heart. The heart is a lesser hell, which is a matter of deep humiliation, the heart is, like the Egyptian temples, full of spiders and serpents.

*Use 2. Of reproof.* It reproves such as abuse their tongues in all manner of evil speaking, lying, flandering, rash anger. 'The heart is a vessel full of sin, and the tongue sets it abroad. O how fast do mens' tongues gallop in sin! they say, they give God their hearts, but let the devil take possession of their tongues, Ps. xii. 4. 'Our lips are our own, who is the Lord over us? Who hath any thing to do with our words? Who shall controul us? Who is our Lord? There is no engine the devil makes more use of than the tongue: what errors, contentions, impieties have been propagated this way, to the dishonour of the High God: David calls his tongue his glory, Psal. lvii. 8. 'Awake my glory.' Why did he call his tongue his glory, but because by it he did set forth God's glory in praising him? But a wicked man's tongue is not his glory, but his shame; with his tongue he wounds the glory of God; 'it is set on fire from hell.'

*Use 3. Confutation. Branch 1.* It confutes the Catharists and Perfectists, that plead for perfection in this life. If the tongue hath so many evils in it, how are they perfect? Prov. xx. 9. 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?' He makes a challenge to all the world. But the Perfectist saith, he is pure from sin: like Isidore the monk, *Non habeo Domine, quod tibi ignoscas*; I have nothing, Lord, for thee to pardon. If pure and perfect, then they put Christ out of office, he hath nothing to do for them as an advocate, they have no need of his intercession: but, Eccl. vii. 20. 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not;' how proud and supercilious are they who hold they are perfect, when the holiest men alive, at some time or other, offend in their tongues? There is no perfection on this side the grave.

*Branch 2.* It confutes the Arminians, those patrons of free-will: they say, "they have power to their own salvation; they can change their hearts." The apostle saith, 'the tongue

can no man tame,' James iii. 8. If they cannot bridle their tongue, how can they conquer their will? If they cannot master this little member, tongue, how can they change their nature?

*Uſe 4. Caution.* Take heed to your tongue; have a care that ye offend not with your tongue, Pfal. xxxiv. 14. 'Keep thy tongue from evil,' Pfal. xxxix. 1. 'I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' An hard leſſon! Pambus ſaid he was above twenty years learning that ſcripture, not to offend with his tongue. The tongue is an unruly member; God hath ſet a double hedge before the tongue, the teeth and lips, to keep it within its bounds, that it do not ſpeak vainly. O look to your tongue. When a city is beſieged, he that keeps the gates of the city, keeps the whole city ſafe; ſo, if you keep the gates or doors of your mouth, you keep your whole ſoul.

*Rules for the well ordering and regulating your words, or the governing of your tongue, that you do not diſhonour God therewith.*

*1ſt Rule.* If you would have better tongues, labour for better hearts. It is the heart hath influence upon the tongue. If the heart be vain and earthly, the tongue will be ſo: if the heart be holy, the tongue will be ſo. Look to thy heart; get a better heart, and a better tongue.

*Qu. How ſhall I get my heart bettered?*

*Anſ.* Get a principal of grace infused. Grace is like the ſalt caſt into the ſpring: grace changeth the heart, and ſanctifies all the members of the body; it ſanctifies the eyes and makes them chaste; it ſanctifies the tongue, and makes it meek and calm. When the Holy Ghoſt came upon the apoſtles, 'they began to ſpeak with other tongues,' Acts ii. 4. When God's Spirit comes on a man with a ſanctifying work, he ſpeaks with another tongue; the ſpeech is heavenly. Grace makes the heart ſerious, and that cures the levity of the tongue; when the heart is ſerious, the words are ſavoury.

*2d Rule.* If you would not ſin in your tongue, call to mind how you have formerly offended in your tongue, and that will make you more watchful for the future. Have not you ſpoken words that have favoured of diſcontent and envy? Have not you been guilty of cenſuring and ſlandering? Have not you been diſguiſed with paſſion? Hath not your tongue out-run your diſcretion? Have not you ſpoken words that you have been ſorry for afterwards, and have cauſed either ſhame or tears? O obſerve former failings, how you have ſinned in your tongue, and that will be a good help for the future. David certainly made a critical obſervation upon ſome of his words wherein he had offended: words of pride, Pf. xxx. 6. 'In my proſperity I ſaid, I ſhall never be moved.' And, Pfal. cxvi. 14. 'I ſaid in my



haste, all men are liars ;' even Samuel, and all the prophets, who promised me the kingdom, they are all liars ; and I shall die before I can come to enjoy it.—David having observed how he had offended in his tongue, he is more careful of his words, and made a strict vow with himself, that he would look better to them, Pl. xxxix. 1. ' I said, I would take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' Look to the former slips of your tongue, and how you have by your words provoked God, and that will be a good means to make you more cautious for the future. A mariner that hath twice touched upon a rock, and been like to be cast away, will be more careful how he comes there again.

*3d Rule.* Watch your tongue : most sin is committed for want of watchfulness. As the tongue hath a double fence set about it, so it had need have a double watch. The tongue, when it is let loose, will be ready to speak loosely ; watch it, lest it run beyond its bounds in frothy and sinful discourse, Prov. xxx. 32. ' If thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth :' that is (say some) lay thy hand upon thy mouth, in token of repentance. But it may bear another sense : if thou hast thought evil, if angry malicious thoughts come into thy mind, lay thy hand upon thy mouth to stop thy lips, that thy thoughts come not into words.

*4th Rule.* If you would not offend in your tongue, ponder your words well before you speak, Eccl. v. 1. ' Be not rash with thy mouth.' Some speak vainly because inconsiderately ; they do not weigh their words before they speak them. A talkative man doth not mind his words, but gives his tongue liberty ; he may speak not only unadvisedly, but unholily, and give just offence.

*5th Rule.* If you would not offend in your tongue, pray to God to guard your tongue, Pl. cxli. 3. ' Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.' Set not about this work in your own strength, but implore God's help ; the tongue can no man tame, James iii. 8. but God can tame it ; therefore go to him by prayer : pray, ' Lord, set a watch before the door of my lips ;' keep me, that I may speak nothing to grieve thy Spirit, or that may tend to thy dishonour.

*6th Rule.* If you would be kept from evil speaking, inure your tongues to good speaking. If you would not have the cask have a bad scent, put good liquor into it ; so, if you would not have your tongue run out sinfully, let it be used to good discourse ; speak often one to another of Christ, and the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ; ' the spouse's lips dropped as an honeycomb,' Cant. iv. 11.

MOTIVES.

*Use.* To beware of tongue-sins.

*1st Motive.* If you have no care of your tongues, all your religion is vain, James i. 26. ‘If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, this man’s religion is vain.’ Many a one will hear the word, and make a profession of religion, but cares not what liberty he takes in his tongue, to reproach and vilify others. This man’s religion is vain ; that is, 1. He hath no religion, his religion is but a shew or pretence. 2. It is vain, because it is ineffectual ; it hath not that force upon him as religion ought.

*2d Motive.* The tongue discovers much of the heart, such as the tongue is, such commonly the heart is. A lascivious tongue shews a lustful heart ; an earthly tongue a covetous heart ; a murmuring tongue a discontented heart. The tongue is oft a commentary upon the heart.

*3d Motive.* To allow ourselves in the abuse of the tongue, cannot stand with grace. I know a good man may sometimes speak unadvisedly with his lips ; he may fly out in words, be in a passion but he doth not allow himself in it ; when his passion is over he weeps, Rom. vii. 15. ‘What I do I allow not :’ but, for a man to allow himself in sin, censuring, flandering, dropping words like coals of fire ; sure it is not consistent with grace.

*4th Motive.* The sins of the tongue are very defiling, James iii. 6. ‘The tongue defileth.’ Defiling to one’s self, and chiefly defiling to others. The tongue conveys poison into the ear of another ; sometimes by false suggestions, raising prejudices in the mind of another against such a person ; sometimes by passionate speeches the spirit of another is provoked.

*5th Motive.* The sins of the tongue are provoking to God, and prejudicial to us. 1. Provoking to God, Psal. cvi. 33. Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips ; what was this unadvised speech ? Numb. x. 11. ‘Hear now ye rebels ; must we fetch you water out of this rock ?’ Though he were a favourite, and God had spoken with him face to face, yet God gives him a check for it ; it turned his smile into a frown. 2. Prejudicial to us ; Moses’ rash speech shut him out of Canaan ; it may shut us out of heaven, of which that was but a type. Origen notes he had sinned most in his tongue ; and God punished him most in his tongue.

*6th Motive.* He who offends not in his tongue, is a perfect man : an high expression ; ‘if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,’ that is, attains to a very high degree, in the highest form of Christ’s school. A prudent man, or an upright man ; or comparatively, in comparison of others, such as have not gotten the conquest over their passions, he is far above them, and, in comparison of them, he is a perfect man ; such an

one was holy Cranmer, that could not be provoked by the ill carriage of others, but requited injuries with kindness.

**7th Motive.** You must give an account to God, as well of your speeches, as your actions, Mat. xii. 36. 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment : ' words of no account, will have an heavy account. And, if God will reckon with men for every idle, angry word ; then, what will he do for sinful oaths ? ' O that my words were written,' Job ix. 23. Truly, if many peoples' words were written, they would be ashamed of them. And, let me tell you, your words are written, Rev. xx. 'The books were opened.' In the book of God's remembrance all your words are written : you had need then be careful you offend not with your tongues ; God writes down all you speak, and you must give an account to him. When Latimer heard the pen going behind the hangings, he was careful in his answers : and, let me tell you, as your words are, such will your sentence be ; when the books are opened, God will proceed with you in judicature, according to your words. By your words you shall be saved or condemned, Mat. xii. 37. 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.'

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**GAL. vi. 9.** *And let us not be weary in well-doing ; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

IN the verses before the text, the apostle had laid down a proposition, 'What a man soweth that shall he reap,' ver. 7. He that sows in sin, shall reap in sorrow ; he that sows the seeds of grace shall reap glory : there is the proposition. In the text, the apostle makes the application, 'Let us not be weary in well-doing.' We that have sown the good seed of repentance, and an holy life, 'Let us not be weary ; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

1. A Dehortation ; 'Let us not be weary ;'

2. The argument ; 'we shall reap in due season.'

*First,* A Dehortation ; 'Let us not be weary.' Where there is, (1.) Something implied ; that we are apt to be weary in well-doing. (2.) Something expressed : that we ought not to be weary in well-doing.

1. The thing implied, that we are apt to be weary in well-doing. This weariness is not from the regenerate part, but the fleshly : as Peter's sinking in the water, was not from the faith in him, but the fear ; this weariness in a Christian course is occasioned from four things ;

(1.) From the revilings of the world, Ps. li. 5. 'My ene-

mies speak evil of me.' Innocency is no shield against reproach. But why should this make us weary of well-doing? Did not Jesus Christ undergo reproaches for us, when the Jews put a crown of thorns on him, and bowed the knee in scorn? Is it any dishonour to us to be reproached for doing that which is good? Is it any disparagement to a virgin to be reproached for her beauty and chastity? Our reproaches for Christ we should bind as a crown about our head. Now a Spirit of glory rests upon us, 1 Pet. iv. 14. 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you.' *Regium est bene facere et male audire*: he that clips our credit to make it weigh lighter, makes our crown heavier. (2.) That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the present sufferings we are exposed to, 2 Cor. iv. 8. 'We are troubled on every side.' But why should this make us weary in well-doing? is not our life a warfare? It is no more strange to meet with sufferings in religion, than for a mariner to meet with storms, or a foldier to meet with bullets. Do not we consider upon what terms we entered into religion! Did not we vow in baptism to fight under Christ's banner? Doth not our Lord tell us, we must take 'up the cross and follow him?' Matth. xvi. 24. Is not this part of the legacy Christ hath bequeathed us? John xvi. 33. We would partake of Christ's glory but not of his sufferings; besides doth not many a man suffer for his sins? Do not men's lusts bring them to an untimely end? Do men suffer for their sins, and do we think much to suffer for Christ? How did St. Paul rejoice in sufferings? 2 Cor. vii. 4. How did he glory in it? 'As a woman that is proud of her jewels,' Chrysost. Why should sufferings make us faint? Who would not be willing to tread upon a few thorns, that is going to a kingdom.

3. That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the deferring of the reward. We are apt to be discouraged and grow weary, if we have not what we desire presently; we are all for present pay. But consider.

(1.) Our work is not yet done, we have not yet finished the faith; the servant doth not receive his pay, till his work be done. Even Christ's reward was deferred till he had done his work; when he had completed our redemption, and said upon the cross, 'It is finished,' then he entered into glory.

(2.) God defers the reward, to make heaven more welcome to us. After all our praying, weeping, suffering, how sweet will the joys of paradise taste!

4. That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the greatness and difficulty of a Christian's work, but why should this make us weary? Difficulty whets a generous mind; the foldier's life hath its difficulties, but they raise his spirits the

more ; he loves to encounter hardship, and will endure a bloody fight for a golden harvest.

Besides, where is the least principle of grace, it renders the way of religion, easy and pleasant. When the loadstone draws, it is easy for the iron to move ; when God's Spirit draws, we move in the way of religion with facility and delight. Christ's service is freedom. Pl. cxix. 45. ' I will walk at liberty.' To serve God, to love God, to enjoy God is the sweetest liberty in the world. Besides, while we serve God, we gratify ourselves ; as he who digs in a mine, while he sweats, he gets gold ; while we glorify God, we promote our own glory.

II. The second thing expressed, is, That we should not grow weary in a Christian course, we should not tire in our race : ' Let us not be weary in well-doing.' The Greek word, to be weary, signifies, ' to shrink back as cowards in war ;' let it not be thus with us ; let us not shrink back from Christ's colours, Heb. iv. 14. ' Let us hold fast our profession ;' We must not only hold forth our profession, but hold fast our profession. The crown is not given to him that fights, but to him that overcomes.

*1st Use. Of Reproof.* It reproves such as are weary of well-doing. There are falling stars, 2 Tim. iv. 10. Demas forsook God, and afterwards became a priest in an idol temple, Dorotheus. Hos. viii. ' Israel hath cast off the thing that is good.' Many have thrown off Christ's livery ; they have left off an holy course of life, they have turned to worldliness or wantonness, Gal. v. 7. ' Ye did run well, who hindered you ?' Why did you tire in your race ? 2 Pet. ii. 21. ' It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment.'

*2d Use.* Exhortation ; ' Let us not be weary in well-doing.' Consider,

1. The way of religion is of good report, Heb. xi. 2. ' By faith the elders obtained a good report.' Shall we be weary of that which is our credit ? If indeed the Christian religion were a thing that would bring shame or loss (as the ways of sin do) then we had cause to desert it, and grow weary of it ; but it brings honour, Prov. iv. 9. ' She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace.' Why then should we be weary of well-doing ?

2. The beauty of a Christian is to hold on in piety without being weary, Acts xxi. 16. ' Mnason of Cyprus an old disciple.' It is a beautiful sight to see silver hairs crowned with golden virtue ; the beauty of a thing is when it comes to be finished. The beauty of a picture is, when it is drawn out in its full lineaments, and laid in its orient colours. The beauty of a Chris-

tian is, when he hath finished his faith, 2 Tim. iv. 7. It was the glory of the church of Thyatira, she kept her best wine till last, Rev. ii. 19. 'I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first.'

3. Such as are weary of well-doing, it is a sign they never acted in religion from choice, or from a principle of faith, but from the external spring of applause or preferment; so that, when these fail, their seeming goodness ceaseth.

4. God is never weary of doing us good; therefore, we should not be weary of serving him. A king that is continually obliging his subject by gifts and gratitudes that subject hath no cause to be weary of serving his prince.

5. If we grow weary, and throw off religion, we make all we have done null and void, Ezek. xviii. 24. 'When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.' He who hath been serving God, and doing angels' work, if once he grows weary and desists, he unravels all his work, and misseth of the recompence of reward: 'He that runs half a race, and then tires loseth the garland.' O what folly is it to do well a while, and by apostacy to undo all! As if a limner should with a pencil draw a fair picture, and then come with his sponge and wipe it out again.

6. Consider the examples of such as have continued their progress unweariably in a Christian course. The apostle sets before our eyes a cloud of witnesses; Heb. xii. 1. 'Being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race that is set before: let us run it with swiftness and constancy. How many noble martyrs and confessors of old, have walked in the ways of God, though they have been strewed with thorns? They scorned preferment, laughed at imprisonments, and their love to Christ burned hotter than the fire. Polycarp, when he came before the proconsul, and he bade him deny Christ; he replied, "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once hurt me, and shall I deny him now?"' Tertullian saith, such was the constancy of the primitive saints, that the persecutors cried out, 'what a misery is this, that we are more weary in tormenting, than they are in enduring torment?' Let us tread in their steps, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

7. It will be our comfort on our death-bed, to review a well spent life. It was Augustin's wish, that he might have a quiet easy death. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, that we have been unweariably in God's work; this will be a death-bed cordial. Did you ever know any repent at death that they had been too holy? Many have repented that they have followed the world too much, not that they have prayed

too much, that they have repented too much. What hath made death sweet, but that they have ‘finished their course, and kept the faith?’

8. Think of the great reward we shall have, if we do not give over, or grow weary, and that is, glory and immortality. (1.) This glory is ponderous : it is called a ‘weight of glory,’ 1 Cor. iv. 17. The weight adds to the worth ; the weightier a crown of gold is, the more it is worth. (2.) It is satisfying, Psal. xvii. 15. ‘I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.’ This glory will abundantly recompence all our labours and sufferings. The joy of harvest will make amends for all the labour in sowing, O what harvest shall the saints reap ! It will be always reaping time in heaven, and this reaping will be in due season ; so the apostle saith in the text, ‘We shall reap in due season.’ The husbandman doth not desire to reap till the season ; he will not reap his corn while it is green, but when it is ripe ; so we shall reap the reward of glory in due season ; when our work is done, when our sins are purged out, when our graces are come to their full growth, then is the season of reaping ; therefore let us not be weary of well doing, but hold on in prayer, reading, and all the exercises of religion : we shall ‘reap in due season, if we faint not.’ To keep us from fainting, know, that the reward promised is very near, Rom. xiii. 11. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed.’ We are but within a few days march of the heavenly Canaan ; it is but a few more prayers and tears shed, and we shall be perfect in glory ; as that martyr, Dr. Taylor said, “I have but one stile more to go over, and I shall be at my Father’s house.” Stay but a while, Christians, and your trouble shall be over, and your coronation day shall come. Christ who is the oracle of truth hath said, ‘Behold I come quickly.’ Rev. xxii. 20. And yet death’s coming is sooner than Christ’s personal coming, and then begins the saints blessed jubilee.

Qu. *What means shall we use, that we may not weary in a Christian course.*

Ans. 1. Let us shake off spiritual sloth : sloth saith, ‘there is a lion in the way.’ He who is slothful, will soon grow weary ; he is fitter to lie on his couch, than run a race. It is a strange sight, to see a busy devil, and an idle Christian.

Ans. 2. If we would not grow weary, let us pray for persevering grace. It was David’s prayer, Psal. cxix. 117. ‘Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.’ And it was Beza’s prayer, “Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me.” That we may hold on a Christian course, let us labour for three persevering graces. (1.) Faith. Faith keeps from fainting ; faith gives a substance to things not seen, and makes them to be as it were present, Heb. xi. 1. As a perspective glass makes those

things which are at a distance near to the eye, so doth faith, heaven, and glory, seem near. A Christian will not be weary of service that hath the crown in his eye. (2.) The second persevering grace is hope. Hope animates the spirits; it is to the soul as cork to the net, which keeps it from sinking. Hope breeds patience, and patience breeds perseverance. Hope is compared to an anchor, Heb. vi. 19. The Christian never sins, but when he casts away his anchor. (3.) Persevering grace is love. Love makes a man that he is never weary. Love may be compared to the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which refresheth him, and keeps him from being weary in his journey. He who loves the world, is never weary of following the world: he who loves God will never be weary of serving him; that is the reason why the saints and angels in heaven are never weary of praising and worshipping God; because their love to God is perfect, love turns service into delight. Get the love of God into your hearts, and you will run in his ways, and not be weary.



JAMES iii. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

THE apostle, in the former verses, had met with a sin common in those days, a sinful boasting among men, verse 13. 'Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain;' whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow: you may be in your graves before to-morrow; 'for what is your life? It is even a vapour.' A vapour being an exhalation, it cannot continue long; as it is raised by the sun, so it is dispersed by the wind; such is your life; a vapour; a short breath, a flying shadow; it appears for 'a little time, and then vanisheth.' Well might they say, what need we be taught such a plain lesson? Who knows not all this, that life is a vapour, and that we ought not to boast what we will do to-morrow. The apostle seems in the text to meet with them by way of answer, Do ye know all this? Then the greater is your sin that you do it not; 'to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.' I shall only explain this phrase, 'to him it is sin;' that is, it is an heinous sin, it is a sin with a witness: every infirmity, every thing that falls short of this rule, is sin; much more, that which contradicts the rule. This man's sin hath an emphasis, it is a crimson sin, and it shall have a greater punishment; 'he that knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,' Luke xii. 47. If he that sins ignorantly be damned, then he that sins knowingly shall be double damned.



1. Doctrine implied, *That we ought to know to do good; know our duty.*
2. *That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it.*
3. *That he that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others most guilty.*

I. Doctrine implied, That we ought to know to do good; we ought to be well informed of those things which are to be done by us, in order to salvation. The word written is a rule of knowledge, and the word preached is a commentary upon the word written: and both of them are to enrich our understanding, and to nurse us up in the knowledge of that which is good.

*The reasons why we should know to do good, are,*

1. Knowledge is our lamp and star to guide us in the truth. It shews us what we are to do, and what we are to leave undone. If we do not know that which is good, we can never practise it.

2. Knowledge is the foundation of all graces; of faith; 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee,' Psal. ix. 10. and of love, Phil. i. 9. 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge.' And of perseverance: the apostle joins these two, such as are unlearned, will be unstable.

3. The chief work in conversion consists in knowledge, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' The mind being renewed, the man is transformed. The first part of God's image consists in knowledge, Col. iii. 10.

4. There is nothing in religion, though never so excellent, can do us good without knowledge.

*Uſe.* See how necessary it is to get the knowledge of what is good; it utters in salvation, 1 Tim. ii. 4. Ignorance of God is the cause of all sin, Jer. ix. 3. Ignorance of God damns, Hos. iv. 6. It is sad to be ignorant in gospel times; but many, alas! do not only not know God, but they are not willing to know, Jer. ix. 6. 'They refuse to know me, saith the Lord.'

II. Doctrine. 'That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it.' This the apostle implies, 'to him that knows to do good, and doth it not;' he implies, that he who knows to do good should do it; the end of knowledge is practice. Search from one end of the Bible to the other, and you will find, that it is the practical part of religion is chiefly intended. The crown is not set upon the head of knowledge, but practice, Rev. xxii. 14. 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.'

*Uſe* 1. It shews us wherein most Christians are defective in the times of gospel, viz. in the doing part of religion, they know how to do good, but do it not. They know they should abstaia

from evil, and pursue holiness; but though they know this, yet they do it not.

(1.) They know they should abstain from evil. Thus they know they should not swear, Mat. v. 34. 'Swear not at all;' yet they do it; they are more free of their oaths than their alms. They know uncleanness to be a sin; that it wastes the body, wounds the conscience, blots the name, damns the soul, Gal. v. 19. yet they will go on in that sin, and for a cup of pleasure drink a sea of wrath. They know drunkenness to be a sin; that it doth make them like beasts, takes away their reason, unfits them for happiness; for they cannot think to go reeling to heaven; they know that God is preparing a cup for the drunkard, Rev. xvi. 19. yet for all that they will not leave their drunken fits. Men know that rash censuring is a sin, James iv. 11. 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren;' yet they are guilty of this; they will not swear, but they will slander; and speak to the prejudice of others; they can never make them recompence for this: no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue. Thus they know that covetousness is a sin, yea, the root of all evil; yet the world engrosseth all their time and thoughts: they thirst after gold more than grace, and are labouring more to have a full purse than a good conscience. They know they should not vent their passions, Jam. i. 26. 'If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain.' Origen observes of the rich man in the gospel, he had no water to cool his tongue: he had sinned most in his tongue, therefore was punished most in it. How unworthy is it for men to have their eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, and their tongues set on fire from hell; at one time praying, and another time cursing? How can such pray in a family, that are possessed with an angry devil? Thus men know they should abstain from evil, but they do it not.

(2.) They know they should pursue holiness, but they do it not. They know they should read the word, sanctify the sabbath, use holy conference, pray in their families, redeem the time, walk circumspectly; they know to do good, but do it not.

Qu. *Whence is it that men know to do good, yet do it not.*

Ans. It is for want of sound conviction. Men are not thoroughly convinced of the necessity of practical godliness; they think there is a necessity of knowledge, because else there is no salvation; they will get some notions of Christ, that he is a Saviour, and has satisfied divine justice, and they hope they believe in him; well then, we tell them that faith and obedience go together; then God is merciful; and though they are not so good as they should be, yet free grace will save them. Thus men content

themselves with general notions of religion, but are not convinced of the practical part of godliness.

(2.) Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they are not awakened out of their spiritual sloth. It is easy to get the knowledge of a truth, to give assent to it, to commend it, to profess it; but to digest knowledge into practice is difficult.

3. Men know to do good, but do it not, through incredulity; they are in part Atheists. Did they believe that sin were so bitter, that wrath and hell followed it, would they not leave off their sins? Did they believe that to do the will of God were a privilege, religion were their interest, that there is joy in the way of godliness, and heaven at the end, would they not espouse holiness? But people, though they have some slight transient thoughts of these things, yet they are not brought to the belief of them; therefore though they know to do good, yet they do it not. The reason why there are so few doers of the word, is, because there are so few believers.

4. Men know to do good, but do it not, because the knowledge in their head never works into their hearts; it doth not quicken them, nor warm their affections with love to the truth.

5. Men know to do good, but do it not, because of prejudicate opinion. The things to be done in religion are judged to be too strict and severe; they restrain sin too much, or they press too much to holiness.

6. Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they love their sin more than they love the world, Hos. iv. 8. 'They set their heart on their iniquity.' Some content themselves with having means of knowledge, Judges xvii. 13. 'Then said Micah, now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest.' But what is one the better to know what physic he should take, if he doth not take it.

*Use 2. Of Exhortation.* Let me beseech you all who have been hearers of the word, and have gotten a great measure of knowledge, that, as you know to do good, you would do it. This is the soul of religion, Luther says, I had rather do the will of God, than be able to work miracles. *1<sup>st</sup>*, To do what you know, evidenceth your relation to Christ. You count it an honour to be near allied to the crown, but it is more honour to be a-kin to Christ. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, To know to do good, and do it, sets a crown upon the gospel, Rom. xvi. 19. 'Your obedience is come abroad unto all men;' not your knowledge, but your obedience. To know to do good, and not do it, hardens others in sin, scandalizeth religion, and makes people ready to turn atheists. When some of the Spaniards came to Hispaniola, the Spaniards' carriage being loose and profane, the Indians asked them, What God they served? They answered, the God of

Heaven : the Indians replied, sure your God is not a good God that hath such bad servants. Thus to know to do good, yet do it not, puts a scar in the face of religion, and brings an evil report upon it ; but to do what we know, trumpets forth the fame of the gospel, and makes them that oppose it, to admire it.

*Sdly*, To know to do good and to do it, entitles you to blessedness, Jam. i. 25. ‘ He shall be blessed in his deed :’ not for the deed, but in the deed.

III. Doct. *That he who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others the most guilty* : to him it is sin, crimson sin ; that is, it is heinous sin, capital sin, sin emphatically ; sin with a witness, and punished with a vengeance.

Qu. *What is it to sin presumptuously ?*

Ans. To sin presumptuously, is to sin against the light which shines in a man’s conscience, *i. e.* A man is convinced those things he doth are sin : conscience saith, O do not this great evil : conscience, like the cherubims, hath a flaming sword in its hand, to affright and deter the sinner, yet he will pluck the forbidden fruit : This is to sin presumptuously.

This sin is highly aggravate, for two reasons.

(1.) Because sinning presumptuously against conscience, is after counsels, admonitions, warnings. Such an one cannot say, he was never told of his sin ; he hath had ministers rising up early, who hath told him what a damnable thing sin was, yet he would venture on ; so that now he hath no excuse, John xv. 22. ‘ Now you have no cloke for your sin.’

(2.) It is an aggravation to sin presumptuously against conscience, when it is after afflictions. After God hath made him hear the voice of the rod, he hath made him to feel sin bitter, to read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins ; his sin was following evil company, and God hath punished him for it ; he hath almost wasted his estate with riotous living, or he hath almost drunk himself blind, yet he will not leave his sin : his sin was uncleanness, and his body is diseased, and full of noxious humours ; yet though he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. Here is an aggravation of sin, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. ‘ In the time of his distress, did he trespass yet more against the Lord : this is that king Ahaz.’

Use 3. To know what is good, yet not to do it, is to sin presumptuously, is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness ; it is so, because men can say nothing for their sins, can bring no reason, they make no defence for themselves, yet they are resolved to hold fast their iniquity like those, Jer. xviii. 12. ‘ And they said, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do after the imagination of his own evil heart.’

Use 3. Take heed of presumptuous sin. If God hath been

so terrible against sins of infirmity and passion, as we see in Moses and Uzziah ; O how fierce will his anger be against the presumptuous sinner ! better never have known the ways of God, than to know and not do it. Oh ! as you love your souls, take heed of this !

1. Presumptuous sins are desperate sins, because they are committed with much premeditation and forethought. The presumptuous sinner doth not sin unawares, but he doth project and cast in his mind, how to bring his sin about ; As Joseph's brethren did in betraying him ; as Judas did in betraying Christ ; and as those Jews did that laid wait for Paul.

(2.) Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with pride. The sinner who knows the mind of God, yet will act contrary to it, says like Pharaoh, ' Who is the Lord that I should obey him ? '

(3.) Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with impudency. Such sinners are hardened, fearless and without shame. Like Judas they are hardened : though woes be pronounced against them, they will sin ; they are without fear like the leviathan, Job iv. 33. ' And they have sinned away shame,' Zeph. iii. 5. ' The unjust knoweth no shame, he hath a forehead of brass.' Nay, some are so far from blushing, that they glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19.

4. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good, yet not to do it, is heinous, because it is ingratitude : it is a high abuse of God's kindness, and God cannot endure of all things, to have his kindness abused. God's kindness is seen in this, that he hath acquainted the sinner with his mind and will ; that he hath not only instructed him, but persuaded him, made mercy stoop and kneel to the sinner ; he hath wooed him with his spirit, that he would flee from sin, and pursue holiness : kindness is seen in this, that God hath spared the sinner so long, and not struck him dead in the act of sin : kindness in this, that though the sinner hath sinned against his conscience, yet now, if he will repent of sin, God will repent of his judgments, and mercy shall be held forth, Jer. iii. 1. ' Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers ; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.' But the sinner is of a base spirit : he is not melted with all this love, but his heart like clay hardens under the sun. Here is an apparent abuse of God's kindness ; and God cannot endure to have his kindness abused. The vulture draws sickness from perfumes ; so the sinner contracts wickedness from the mercy of God. Here is high ingratitude.

5. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good, yet not to do it, is a contempt done to God. He cares not whether God be pleased or not ; he will have his sin. Therefore the presumptuous sinner is said to reproach God, Numb. xv. 30.

‘ The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord,’ he reproacheth the Lord, though not explicitly, yet interpretatively; by his presumptuous sin, makes as if God were either ignorant, and did not know his wickedness; or impotent, and were not able to punish him. How horrid is this! there is a kind of blasphemy against God in every presumptuous sin.

6. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good, yet not to do it, is a bold contest with God, a daring of God to punish. The man that sins against conscience presumptuously, and will not be reclaimed, doth in effect say, what care I for the commandment? It shall be no check upon me, but I will go on in sin, and let God do his worst. A godly man is said to fear the commandment, Prov. xiii. 13. He dares not sin, because the law of God stands in his way: but the presumptuous sinner doth not value the commandment; he will sin in spite of God’s law. O desperate madness, to dare God to his face! 1 Cor. x. 22. ‘ Do we provoke the Lord to anger? Are we stronger than he?’ Good reason then we should take heed of presumptuous sin, since it is so heinous and desperate! ‘ To him that knows to do good, yet doth it not to him it is sin;’ it is sin with a witness.

*Use 2. Trial.* Let us examine if we are not guilty of sinning thus presumptuously, knowing to do good, yet not to do it. (1.) Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we live in the total neglect of duty? We know we ought to pray in our families, yet do it not. To live in the neglect of family duties, is not this to sin presumptuously? (2.) Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we will venture upon the same sins which we condemn in others? Rom. ii. 1. Thou (Christian) condemnest another for pride, and yet thou livest in that sin thyself. A father condemns his son for swearing, yet he himself swears; the master reproves his servant for being drunk, yet he himself will be drunk. Is not this to sin presumptuously, to live in those sins which we condemn in others? (3.) Do not they sin presumptuously against conscience, who will sin in spite of heaven? Though they see the judgments of God executed on others, yet will adventure on the same sins? Dan. v. 22. ‘ And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this:’ that is, thou sawest the judgments I inflicted on thy father. (4.) Do not they sin presumptuously, they know to do good, yet do it not, who labour to stifle the convictions of their conscience, and will not let conscience speak freely to them? This the scripture calls, ‘ Holding the truth in unrighteousness,’ Rom. i. 18. (5.) Do not they sin presumptuously who after they have felt the smart of sin, it hath bred a worm in their conscience, a moth in their estate; yet after all this, they again embrace their sins.

That I may shew you what you have to fear, and that I may beat you off from presumptuous sins, let these things be seriously laid to heart; (1.) These presumptuous sins, do much harden the heart. These are two of the greatest blessings, a sound judgment and a soft heart: but sinning presumptuously and knowingly doth congeal the heart; it doth both waste the conscience, and scar it, 1 Tim. iv. 2. By sinning knowingly, a person gets a custom of sin: and the custom of sinning takes away the sense of sinning, Eph. iv. 19. 'being past feeling.' Tell the presumptuous sinner, there are treasures of wrath laid up for him, he fears not; his heart is like a piece of marble or adamant, that will take no impression. When men know to do good, yet do it not, their hearts are hardened insensibly, and that is dangerous. (2.) Such as sin presumptuously, or they who know to do good, yet do it not, are self-condemned, Tit. iii. 11. 'The sinner knows in his conscience he is guilty: that he hath sinned against warnings, education, conviction, therefore his own heart does and must condemn him. And when God judges and condemns him, he will clear his judge, Ps. li. 4. (3.) Presumptuous sins make deep wounds in the soul. They lead to despair, and despair is the agony of the soul. Spira, in despair, was like a living man in hell: despair did suck out his marrow and vital blood: it made him a very anatomy. The sinner goes on stubbornly: yet his foolish heart tells him all will be well? but, when God begins to set his sins in order before him, and conscience, which was before like a lion asleep, begins to be awakened and roars upon him, and he sees death and hell before him, now his heart faints his presumption is turned to despair, and he cries out as Cain, Gen. iv. 13. 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' Now the sinner begins to think with himself thus; I would have my sins, and I had them; and now I have the wrath of God upon them; O how foolish was I to refuse instruction! But it is too late now; the mercy-seat is quite covered with clouds; I am shut out from all hopes of mercy; my wounds are such, that the balm of Gilead will not heal. The more presumption in the time of life, the more despair at the hour of death.

(4.) To know to do good and not to do it, to sin presumptuously, God may, in just judgment, leave such an one to himself. It is a terrible thing, when God shall say, thou hast, by thy presumptuous sin, affronted me, and provoked me to my face: therefore I will give thee up to thine own heart, thou shalt sin still, seeing thou wilt be filthy, thou shalt be filthy still.

(5.) To know what is good, yet not to do it; to sin presumptuously, is a great degree of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Such as sin presumptuously sin wilfully. Though presumption is not final apostacy, yet it comes very near to it; and a little

matter more will make thee so guilty, that there remains no more sacrifice for sin. To sin presumptuously against light, may in time bring on malice and despite to the Spirit : as it was with Julian, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would be revenged on God : when once it is come to this, there is but one step lower a man can fall, and that is into hell.

(6.) There is little hope for such as know to do good, yet do it not : know what is evil, but will not forbear. There were sacrifices for sins of ignorance, but no sacrifices for sins of presumption, Numb. xv. 30. Indeed presumptuous sinners hope all will be well, Prov. xv. 16. ‘ The fool is confident.’ Such a fool is spoken of, Deut. xxix. 19. ‘ When he hears the words of this curse, he blesteth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk after the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst ; the Lord will not spare him, but the anger and jealousy of the Lord shall smoke against that man.’

(7.) Such as sin presumptuously, that know to do good, yet do it not, know what is evil, yet will not forbear it, God refuseth all their services, whether reading, hearing, praying, or communicating. ‘ God abhors their sacrifice,’ Isa. i. 15. ‘ When you make many prayers, I will not hear ; your hands are full of blood.’ And Hos. viii. 13. ‘ They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, but the Lord accepted them not ; now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins.’ Thus you see what cause you have to tremble, who are guilty in this kind ; you see your misery.

Besides all that hath been said, consider these two things.

(1.) You that sin presumptuously, that know to do good, and do it not ; that know what is evil, yet will not forbear ; you cannot sin so cheap as others : though sin will cost every one dear, yet it will cost you dearer. You go directly against conscience ; and if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, you shall be sure to be punished.

(2.) You who sin presumptuously, cannot take so much pleasure in your sin as another may have. One whose conscience is less enlightened, though his sin will be bitter to him afterwards, yet at present he may roll it as honey under his tongue, and find pleasure in it : but you that sin against your knowledge, you cannot have so much pleasure in sin as he ; for conscience will put forth a sting, and all the threatenings of the word will set themselves in battle-array against you, so that you can have no quiet. And that trouble thou feelest now in thy conscience, is but the beginning of sorrow.

Qu. *What shall we do, that we may not sin presumptuously against conscience ?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of little sins, though (to speak properly) there are no such things as little sins, no little treason ; but com-



paratively, one sin may be lesser than another. Take heed of little sins. The frequent committing of lesser sins, will prepare for greater. A lesser distemper of the body, if it be let alone, prepares for a greater distemper : being unjust in a little, prepares for being unjust in much, Luke xvi. 10. Such as were at first more modest, yet by accustoming themselves to lesser sins, by degrees their sins have grown up to a greater heighth, jail-sins have begun at little sins. (2.) If you would not sin presumptuously, viz. knowingly and wilfully, then reverence the dictates of conscience : get conscience well informed by the word, as you set your watch by the sun, and then be ruled by it ; do nothing against conscience. If conscience saith, Do such a thing, though never so displeasing, set upon the duty. When conscience saith, Take heed of such a thing ? come not nigh the forbidden fruit. Conscience is God's deputy or proxy in the soul ; the voice of conscience is the voice of God ; do not stifle any checks of conscience, lest God suffer thee to harden in sin, and by degrees come to presumptuous sin. (3.) Labour to have your knowledge sanctified. Men sin against their knowledge, because their knowledge is not sanctified. Sanctified knowledge works upon the soul ; it inclines us to do good ; it makes us flee from sin ; sanctified knowledge is like a breast-plate, which keeps the arrow of presumptuous sin from entering.

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COL. iii. 11. *But Christ is all in all.*

THE Philosopher saith, every science takes its dignity from the object ; the more noble the object, the more rare the knowledge. Hence it is that Jesus Christ being the most sublime and glorious object, that knowledge which leads us to Christ, must needs be most excellent ; it is called the ' excellency of the knowledge of Christ,' Phil. iii. 8. So sweet is this knowledge, that St. Paul ' determined to know nothing but Christ,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. And indeed what needed he to know more ? for ' Christ is all in all.'

In the text there is a negation and an assumption, something the apostle sets down privatively, and something positively.

1. Privatively. St. Paul tells the Colossians what will not avail them, ' neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth,' &c. Circumcision was a great privilege, it was a badge and cognizance to distinguish the people of God from those who were *exteri* and foreign ; it was a pale between the garden inclosed, and the common. The people of circumcision were a people of God's circumspection, they were under his eye, and his wing ; they were his household family ; rather than they should want,

God would make the heavens a granary, and rain down manna upon them : he would set the rock abroach, and make it a living spring ; how glorious was circumcision ! Rom. ix. 4, 5. What rich jewels hung upon Israel's crown ! but in matters of salvation, all this was nothing, ' neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision,' &c. From whence we may observe,

That external privileges commend no man to God : whether wife, or rich, or noble, this doth not set us off in God's eye, 1 Cor. i. 26. God sees not as man sees ; we are taken with beauty and parts ; these things avail not with God. God lays his left hand upon these, as Jacob did upon Manasseh, Gen. xlviii. 14. God often passeth by those who cast a greater splendor and lustre in the world, and looks upon them of an inferior alloy ; the reason is, ' that no flesh should glory in his presence,' 1 Cor. i. 29. If God should graft his grace only upon wisdom and parts, some would be ready to say, my wisdom or my eloquence, or my nobility have saved me ; therefore ' not many wise, not many noble are called.' God will have no priding or vaunting in the creature.

*Use.* Rest not in outward privileges or excellencies, these are no stocks to graft the hopes of salvation upon ; many of Christ's kindred went to hell. Paul is called the servant of the Lord, Rom. i. 1. And James is called the brother of the Lord, Gal. i. 19. It is ' better to be the servant of the Lord, than the brother of the Lord. The virgin Mary was saved, not as she was the mother of Christ, but as she was the daughter of faith ; it is grace, not blood, gives the precedence ; an heart that hath Christ formed in it, is God's delight, and this brings me to the next.

2. The apostle sets down something positively ; ' But Christ is all in all ;' in which words there is,

1. The subject Christ ; his name is sweet, it is ' as ointment poured forth,' Cant. i. 3. It was Job's wish, ' O that my words were now written, that they were graven with an iron pen, and laid in the rock for ever,' Job xix. 23. And it is my wish, O that this name (this sweet name) of Christ, were now written, that it were graven with the pen of the Holy Ghost in our hearts for ever : the name of Christ hath in it, saith Chrysostom, a thousand treasures of joy.

2. The predicate, ' all in all,' Christ is all fulness, all sweetness ; he is all that is imaginable, all that is desirable ; he who hath Christ, can have no more, for ' Christ is all.'

The proposition out of the words, is, that Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all good things, ' he is all.'

1. Sometimes faith is said to be all, Gal. v. 6. nothing availeth but faith ; faith is all, as it is an instrument to lay hold on

Christ, whereby we are saved ; as a man is saved by catching hold of a bough.

2. Sometimes the new creature is said to be all, Gal. vi. 15. Nothing availeth but a new creature ; the new creature is all, as it qualifies and fits for glory ; ‘ without holiness no man shall see the Lord,’ Heb. xii. 14. It is a saying of Chrysostom, at the day of judgment God will ask that question, as our Saviour did, Matth. xxii. 20. ‘ Whose image and superscription is this ?’ So will God say, whose image is this ? If thou canst not shew him his image consisting in holiness, he will reject thee ; thus the new creature is all.

3. Here in the text Christ is said to be all ; but in what sense is Christ all ? (1.) Christ is all by way of eminency ; all good things are eminently to be found in him ; as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. (2.) Christ is all by way of derivation ; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us thro’ Christ ; as your rich commodities, jewels and spices come by sea ; so all heavenly blessings fall to us thro’ the red sea of Christ’s blood, Rom. xi. 36. ‘ Through him are all things.’ Christ is that spiritual pipe, through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul.

Christ must needs be all ; for ‘ in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head,’ Col. ii. 7. He hath a partnership with God the Father. John xvi. 15. ‘ All that the Father hath is mine,’ so that there is enough in him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens, to supply all our wants ; there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

*Use* 1. Information. And it hath six branches. (1.) It shews us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ ‘ he is all in all.’ Christ is a panoply, a magazine and storehouse of all spiritual riches : you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ ; for he is ‘ all in all.’

Now, in particular, Christ is all in six respects. (1.) Christ is all in regard of righteousness. 1 Cor. i. 30. ‘ He is made to us righteousness.’ The robe of innocency, like the vail of the temple, is rent asunder ; ours is a ragged righteousness. Isa. lxiv. 6. ‘ Our righteousness is as filthy rags.’ As under rags the naked body is seen ; so, under the rags of our righteousness, the body of death is seen ; we can defile our duties, but they cannot justify us ; but Christ is all in regard of righteousness, Rom. x. 4. ‘ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe :’ that is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother ; so, in the garment of Christ our elder brother we obtain the blessing ; Christ’s righteousness is a coat woven without seam, 2 Cor. v. *ult.* ‘ We

are made the righteousness of God in him.' (2.) Christ is all in regard of sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'He is made unto us sanctification.' Sanctification is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is nothing else but God's putting upon us the jewels of holiness, the angel's glory; by it we are made as the king's daughter, 'all glorious within,' Psal. xlv. 13. This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns iron into gold, it makes the heart, which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. The virgins, Esth. ii. 12. 'had their days of purification;' they were first to be perfumed and anointed, and then they were to stand before the king: we must have 'the anointing of God,' 1 John ii. 27. and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours, and then we shall stand before the King of heaven; there must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification; what a blessed work is this! a soul beautified and adorned with grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. O what a metamorphose is there! I may allude to that, Cant. iii. 6. 'So, who is this that comes out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the spirit?' Holiness is the signature and engraving of God upon the soul; but whence is this? Christ is all, he is made to us sanctification; he it is that sends his Spirit into our hearts, to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul 'with healing under his wings,' Mal. iv. 2. He heals the understanding, and saith, 'Let there be light;' he heals the heart by dissolving the stone in his blood; he heals the will, by silencing off its rebellion. Thus he is all in regard of sanctification. (3.) Christ is all in regard of divine acceptance. Eph. i. 6. He hath made us favourites; so Chrysostom and Theophylact render it; through Christ God is propitious to us, and takes all we do in good part.

A wicked man being out of Christ, is out of favour; as his ploughing is sin, Prov. xxi. 4. so his praying is sin, Prov. xv. 8. God will not come near him, his breath is infectious; God will hear his sins, and not his prayers; but now in Christ God accepts us, Eccl. ix. 7. As Joseph did present his brethren before Pharaoh, and brought them into favour with the king, Gen. xlvii. 2. So the Lord Jesus carries the names of the saints upon his breast, and presents them before his Father, so bringing them into repute and honour; through Christ God will treat and parly with us, he speaks to us, as Isa. lxii. 4. Through the red glass every thing appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. (4.) Christ is all in regard of divine assistance; a Christian's strength lies in Christ, Phil. iv. 13. Whence is it a Christian is able to do duty, to resist

temptation; but through Christ's strengthening? Whence is it that a sparkle of grace lives in a sea of corruption, the storms of persecution blowing, but that Christ holds this sparkle in the hollow of his hand? Whence is it that the roaring lion hath not devoured the saints, but that the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath defended them? Christ not only gives us our crown but our shield; he not only gives us our garland when we overcome, but our strength whereby we overcome, Rev. xii. 11. 'They overcame him (that is, the accuser of the brethren) by the blood of the Lamb.' Christ keeps the fort-royal of grace that it be not blown up; Peter's shield was bruised, but Christ kept it that it was not broken. 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 31, 32. that it be not in a total eclipse. The crown of all the saints' victories must be set upon the head of Christ, Rom. viii. 38. Write the name of Michael upon all your conquest. (5.) Christ is all in regard of pacification; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, he pours the balm of his blood into these wounds; 'he maketh the storm a calm.' Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but in the court of conscience; he not only makes peace above us, but within us, John xvi. ult. Saith Cyprian, all our golden streams of peace flow from this fountain. John xiv. 27. 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' Jesus Christ not only purchased peace for us, but speaks peace to us; he is called 'the Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6. Thus Christ is all in regard of pacification, he makes peace for us, and in us; this honey and oil flow out of the rock Christ. (6.) Christ is all in regard of remuneration, he it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings: he died to advance us; his lying in the wine-press, was to bring us into the wine-cellar; he is gone before to take possession of heaven in the name of all believers. Heb. vi. 20. 'Whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus.'—Christ is gone to bespeak a place for the saints, John xiv. 2. He makes heaven ready for them, and makes them ready for heaven. Thus Christ is all in regard of remuneration. Rev. xxii. 12. 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.'

2. If Christ be all, it shews us what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nihil*; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all, Prov. xxiii. 5. 'Wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?' The creature is a non-entity; though it hath a physical existence, yet considered theologically, it is nothing; it is but a gilded shadow, a pleasant fancy; when Solomon had sifted up the finest flour, and distilled the spirits of all created excellency, here is the result, 'ALL WAS VANITY,' Eccl. ii. 11. We read, the earth in the creation was void; Gen. i. 2.

so are all earthly comforts void ; they are void of that which we think is in them, they are void of satisfaction ; therefore they are compared to wind, Hof. xii. 5. ‘ A man can no more fill his heart with the world, than he can fill his belly with the air he draws in.—Now the creature is said to be nothing in a three-fold sense.

1. It is nothing to a man in trouble of spirit ; if the spirit be wounded, outward things will give no more ease than a crown of gold will cure the head-ache.

2. The creature is nothing to a man that hath heaven in his eye ; when St. Paul had seen ‘ that light shining from heaven, surpassing the glory of the sun,’ Acts xxvi. 13. though his eyes were open, ‘ he saw no man,’ Acts ix. 8. so he that hath the glory of heaven in his eye, is blind to the world ; he sees nothing in it to allure him, or make him willing to stay here.

3. The creature is nothing to one that is dying ; a man at the hour of death is most serious, and is able to give the truest verdict of things ; now at such a time the world is nothing, it is in an eclipse, the sorrow of it is real, but the joy imaginary. Oh then what a vast difference is there between Christ and the creature ! Christ is ‘ all in all,’ and the creature nothing at all ; yet how many damn their souls for nothing ?

3. It shews whither the soul is to go in the want of all ; go to Christ who is all in all. Dost thou want grace ? Go to Christ, Col. ii. 3. ‘ In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Christ is the great Lord treasurer ; go then to Christ ; say, Lord, I am indigent of grace, but in thee are all my fresh springs, fill my cistern from thy spring. Lord, I am blind, thou hast eye-salve to anoint me ; I am defiled thou hast water to cleanse me ; my heart is hard, thou hast blood to soften me : I am empty of grace, bring thy fulness to my emptiness. In all our spiritual wants, we should repair to Christ, as Jacob’s sons did to their brother Joseph ; ‘ He opened all the store-houses,’ Gen. xli. 56. and ‘ gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way,’ Gen. xlii. 25. Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph. Col. ii. 3. ‘ In him are hid all treasures.’ Oh then sinners, make out to Christ ; he is ‘ all in all ;’ and to encourage you to go to him, remember there is in him not only fulness, but freeness : ‘ Ho every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters ;’ Christ is not only full as the honey-comb, but he drops as the honey-comb.

4. If Christ be all, see here the Christian’s inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ ! he hath all that may make him completely happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, my husband, and his triumphs are my jewels ! so, if a Christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, Christ is my riches. A true saint

cannot be poor, if you look into his house, perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie on, 1 Cor. iv. 11. 'Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place.' Come to many a child of God, and bid him make his will, he saith as Peter, Acts iii. 6. 'Silver and gold have I none;' yet he can at the same time make his triumph with the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 10. 'As having nothing, yet possessing all;' he hath Christ who is all. When a believer can call nothing his, he can say all is his. The tabernacle was covered with badger skins, Exod. xxv. 5. yet most of it was of gold; so a saint may have a poor covering, ragged clothes, but he is inlaid with gold, 'Christ is formed in his heart,' and so he is all glorious within.

5. How should a Christian sit down satisfied with Christ! 'Christ is all.' What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? if a man hath sun-shine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle; hath he not enough who hath the 'unsearchable riches of Christ?' I have read of a godly man, who being blind, his friend asked him if he was not troubled for the want of his sight? he confessed he was; why saith his friend, are you troubled because you want that which flies, when you have that which angels have? So I say to a Christian, Why art thou troubled for wanting that which a reprobate has, when thou hast that which the glorified saints have? Thou hast Christ with all his perquisites and royalties! suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the mean time settles his land upon thee, he gives thee the field wherein the pearl of price is hid, hast thou any cause to repine? a Christian that wants necessaries, yet having Christ, he hath the one thing needful, Col. ii. 10. 'Ye are complete in him;' What? complete in Christ, and not content with Christ? Luther saith, the sea of God's mercy should swallow up our particular afflictions; surely this sea of God's love in giving us Christ, should drown all our complaints and grievances; let the Christian take the harp and the viol, and bless God.

6. If Christ be all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing, Rev. iii. 17. 'Thou art wretched, miserable and poor,' &c. The sadness of a man that wants Christ, will appear in these seven particulars.

1. He hath no justification; what a glorious thing is it when a poor sinner is absolved from guilt, and is declared to be *rectus in curia*! but this privilege flows from Christ: all pardons are sealed in his blood, Acts xiii. 39. 'by him all that believe are justified:' so that he who is out of Christ is unjustified: the guilt of sin cleaves to him; he must be responsible to justice in

his own person, and the curse stands in full force against the sinner.

2. He that wants Christ, wants the beauty of holiness ; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace, John i. 14. ‘ Full of grace and truth.’ Now a Christless person, is a graceless person, he hath not one shred of holiness. The scions must first, be ingrafted into the stock, before it can receive sap and influence from the root ; we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can of his fulness receive grace for grace, John i. 16. A man out of Christ is red with guilt, and black with filth ; he is an unhallowed person, and dying in that condition, is rendered incapable of seeing God, Heb. xii. 14.

3. He that wants Christ, hath no true nobility ; it is through Christ that we are a-kin to God, of the blood royal of heaven ; it is through Christ that ‘ God is not ashamed to be called our God,’ Heb. xi. 16. But out of Christ we are looked upon as ignoble persons ; the traitors’ blood runs in our veins : a man out of Christ is base-born : whoever is his natural father, the devil is his spiritual father, John iv. 48.

4. He that wants Christ, wants his freedom ; John viii. 36. ‘ If the son make you free, you shall be free indeed.’ A man out of Christ, is a slave, when he sins most freely.

5. He that wants Christ, hath no ability for service ; he is as Samson, when his locks was cut ; his strength is gone from him, he wants a vital principle, he cannot walk with God, he is like a dead member in the body, that hath neither strength nor motion, John xv. 5. ‘ Without me ye can do nothing.’ The organs will make no sound unless you blow in them ; so unless Christ by his Spirit breathe in the soul, it cannot make any harmony, or put forth strength to any holy action.

6. He that wants Christ, hath no consolation ; Christ is called the consolation of Israel, Luke ii. 25. A Christless soul is a comfortless soul ; how can such an one have comfort when he comes to die ? he is in debt and hath no surety ; his wounds bleed, and he hath no physician ; he sees the fire of God’s wrath approaching, and hath no screen to keep it off ; he is like a ship in a tempest ; sickness begins to make a tempest in his body, and sin to make a tempest in his conscience, and he hath no where to put in for a harbour ; oh the terror and anguish of such a man at the hour of death ! Isa. xiii. 8. ‘ Their face shall be as flames ;’ an elegant expression ! the meaning is, such fear and horror shall seize upon sinners in the evil day, that their countenances shall change and be as pale as a flame ; what are all the comforts of the world to a dying sinner ? he looks upon his friends, but they cannot comfort him ; bring his bags of gold and silver, they are as smoky to sore eyes, it grieves him to part with them ; bring him music, what comfort is the harp and viol



to a condemned man? There is in Spain Tarantulas, venomous spiders, and those who are stung with them, are almost dead, and are cured with music! but those that die without Christ, who is the consolation of Israel, and are in such hellish pangs and agonies, that no music is able to cure them.

7. He that wants Christ, hath no salvation. Eph. v. 23. 'He is the Saviour of the body;' he saves none but them who are members of his body mystical; a strong scripture against the doctrine of universal redemption; Christ leaped into the sea of his Father's wrath, only to save his spouse from drowning; 'he is the Saviour of the body;' so that those who die out of Christ, are cut off from all hopes of salvation.

2. It reproveth them who busy themselves about other things with a neglect of Christ; Isa. lv. 2. 'Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' If you get all the world, you are but golden beggars without Christ. The physician finds out noxious diseases, but is ignorant of foul-diseases; and while he gets receipts to cure others, he neglects the receipt of Christ's blood to cure himself. The lawyer while he clears other men's titles to their land, he himself wants a title to Christ. The tradesman is busied in buying and selling, but neglects to trade for the pearl of price; like Israel, who went up and down to gather straw: or like the load-stone, that draws iron to it, but refuseth gold. These who mind the world, so as to neglect Christ, their work is but spider work. Hab. ii. 13. 'Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?'

1. If Christ be all, then set an high valuation upon Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'To you that believe he is precious.' If there were a jewel which contained in it the worth of all jewels, would you not prize that? Such a jewel is Christ; so precious is he, that St. Paul counted all things 'dung, that he might win Christ,' Phil. iii. 8. Oh that I could raise the appretiation of Jesus Christ! prize Christ above your estates, above your relations; that man doth not deserve Christ at all, who doth not prize Christ above all. Jesus Christ is an incomprehensible blessing; whatever God can require for satisfaction, or can desire for salvation, is to be found in Christ; oh then let him be the highest in our esteem; no writing shall please me, saith saint Bernard, If I do not read the name of Christ there. The name of Christ is the only music to a Christian's ear, and the blood of Christ is the only cordial to a Christian's heart.

2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price; in Christ there is the accumulation of all good things; oh then let not your souls be quiet, till this bundle of myrrh lie between

your breasts, Cant. i. 13. In other things we strive for property ; this house is mine, these jewels are mine, and why not this Christ is mine ? There are only two words which will satisfy the soul, Deity and property : *quid est Deus, non est meus ?* saith Austin. What was it better for the old world they had an ark, as long as they did not get into the ark ? And that I may persuade all to get to Christ, let me shew you what an enriching blessing Christ is.

1. Christ is a supreme good ; put what you will in the balance with Christ, he doth infinitely outweigh. Is life sweet ? Christ is better ! he is the life of the soul, Col. iii. 4. ‘ his loving-kindness, is better than life,’ Psal. lxxiii. 3. Are relations sweet ? Christ is better ; he is the friend that ‘ sticks closer than a brother.’

2. Christ is a sufficient good ; he who hath Christ, needs no more ; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. If one had a manuscript that contained all manner of learning in it, having all the arts and sciences, he need look in no other book ; so he that hath Christ, needs look no further. Christ gives grace and glory, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. The one to cleanse us, the other to crown us : as Jacob said, ‘ It is enough, Joseph is yet alive,’ Gen. xlv. 28. So he that hath Christ, may say, it is enough, Jesus is yet alive.

3. Christ is a suitable good ; in him dwells all fulness, Col. i. 19. He is whatever the soul can desire, &c. Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich ; balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, salvation to crown ; if we are in danger, Christ is a shield ; if we are disconsolate, he is a sun ; he hath enough in his wardrobe abundantly to furnish the soul.

4. Christ is a sanctifying good ; he makes every condition happy to us, he sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses.

1. Christ sweetens all our comforts, he turns them into blessings ; health is blessed ; estate is blessed, relations are blessed. Christ’s love is as the pouring sweet water on flowers, which makes them cast a more fragrant perfume. A wicked man cannot have that comfort in outward things which a godly man hath ; he may possess more, but he enjoys less ; he who hath Christ may say, this mercy is reached to me by the hand of my Saviour, this is a love-token from him, an earnest of glory.

2. Christ sanctifies all our crosses, they shall be medicinal to the soul ; they shall work sin out, and work grace in ; God’s stretching the strings of his viol, is to tune it, and make the music better ; Christ sees to it that his people lose nothing in the furnace but their drossy impurities.

5. Christ is a rare blessing, there are but few that have him ;

the best things when they grow common, begin to be slighted ; when ‘ silver was in Jerusalem as stones,’ 1 Kings x. 27. It was apt to be trod upon ; Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with, which may both raise our esteem of him and quicken our pursuit after him ; those to whom God hath given both the Indies, he hath not given them Christ ; they have the fat of the earth, but not the dew of heaven ; and among us protestants, many who hear of Christ, but few that have him. Read Luke iv. 25. There are many in this city who have Christ founded in their ears, but few who have Christ formed in their hearts : O how should we labour to be of this few ! they who are Christians should be restless.

6. Christ is a select choice good ; God shews more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. God may give us others things, and hate us ; but in giving Christ to a man, he gives him the blessings of the throne : what though others have a crutch to lean on, if thou hast Christ to lean on ! Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts, but ‘ he gave all he had to Isaac,’ Gen. xxv. God may send away others with a little gold or silver ; but if he gives thee Christ, he gives thee all that ever he hath ; for ‘ Christ is all, and in all.’

7. Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good ; without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust ; riches are not good, they are golden snares ; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us, they profit not ; they are as breasts without milk, as bottles without wine ; nay, they are not only a dead letter, but a flavour of death ; without Christ, they will damn us ; for want of Christ, millions go loaded to hell with ordinances.

8. Christ is an enduring good ; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends ; ‘ the Heavens shall wax old like a garment,’ Ps. cii. 26.—But Jesus Christ is a permanent good, with him are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. They last as long as eternity itself lasts.

9. Christ is a diffusive communicative good ; he is full not only as a vessel but as a spring, he is willing to give himself to us. Now then if there be all this excellency in Jesus Christ, it may make us ambitiously desirous of an interest in him.

*Q. But how shall I get a part in Christ.*

*Ans.* 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without him. How obnoxious are to you to God’s eye ! how odious to his nature ! how obnoxious to his justice ! O sinner, how near is the sergeant to arrest thee ! the furnace of hell is heating for thee, and what wilt thou do without Christ. It is only the Lord Jesus, can stand as a screen to keep off the

fire of God's wrath from burning thee. Tell me then, is there not need of Christ?

2. Be importunate after Christ, Lord, give me Christ, or I die. As Achish said to his father Caleb, Josh. xv. 19. 'Thou hast given me south land, give me also springs of water.' So should a poor soul say, Lord, thou hast given me an estate in the world, but this south-land will not quench my thirst, give me also springs of water. Give me those living springs which run in my Saviour's blood; thou hast said, 'Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17, 18. Lord, I thirst after Jesus Christ, nothing but Christ will satisfy me; I am dead, I am damned without him, oh give me this water of life.

3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31. Be sure you do not compound or indent with Christ. Some would have Christ and their sins too. Is Christ all, and will you not part with something for this all? Christ would have you part with nothing but what will damn you, if you keep, namely your sins.

There are some bid fair for Christ, they will part with some sins, but keep a reserve. Doth that man think he shall have Christ's love that feeds sin in a corner? O part with all for him who is all. Part with thy lusts, nay thy life if Christ calls. It exhorts us not only to get Christ, but to labour to know that we have Christ, John ii. 3. 'Hereby we know that we know him.' This reflex act of faith is more than the direct act. Some divines call it the perception, or sensible feeling of faith; now concerning this knowledge that Christ is ours, which is the same with assurance, I shall lay down these four corollaries or conclusions. 1. That this knowledge is feasible, it may be had, 1 John v. 15. 'These things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.'

1. Why else doth God bid us make our calling and election sure, 2 Peter. i. 10. if assurance may not be had? and to 'prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith,' 2 Cor. xiii. 5. if we cannot come to this knowledge that Christ is ours?

2. What are all the signs which the scripture gives of a man in Christ but so many cyphers, if the knowledge of his interest may not be had? 1 John iii. 14. and John iv. 13.

3. There are some duties enjoined in scripture, which to perform is utterly impossible, if the knowledge of an interest in Christ be not attainable; we are bid 'to rejoice in God,' Phil. iv. 4. and 'to rejoice in tribulation,' 1 Pet. iv. 13. How can he rejoice in suffering, who doth not know whether Christ be his or not?

4. Why hath Christ promised to send the comforter, John

xiv. 16. Whose very work it is to bring the heart to this assurance, if assurance that Christ is ours may not be had ?

5. Some of the saints have arrived at this certainty of knowledge ; therefore it may be had. Job knew that his Redeemer lived, Job xix. 25. And saint Paul had this assurance, 2 Tim. i. 12. Gal. ii. 20. Yea, may some say, Paul was an eminent believer, a Christian of the first magnitude, no wonder if he had this jewel of assurance ! nay, but the apostle speaks of it as a case incident to other believers, Rom. viii. 35. ‘ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? ’ He doth not say, who shall separate me ? but us ! so that by all it appears that a believer may come to spell out his interest.

*Caution 1.* Not that the saints have always the same certainty, or that they have such an assurance as excludes all doubtings and conflicts ; there will be flowings and ebbings in their comforts, as well as in their graces : was it not so in David ? Sometimes we hear him say, ‘ God’s loving-kindness was before his eyes,’ Ps. xxvi. 3. As it is a proverbial speech, I have such a thing in my eye, I see it just before me ; but at another time, ‘ Where are thy loving kindneses ? ’ Ps. lxxxix. 49. These doubtings and convulsions God suffers in his children sometimes, that they may long the more for heaven, where they shall have a constant spring-tide of joy.

*Caution 2.* Not that all believers have the same assurance. (1.) Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith : now as the root of the rose or tulip may be alive, where the flower is not visible ; so faith may live in the heart, where the flower of assurance doth not appear. (2.) Assurance is difficult to be obtained ; it is a rare jewel, but hard to come by, not many Christians have this jewel. (1.) God sees it good sometimes to withdraw assurance from his people, that they may walk humbly.

(2.) Satan doth what he can to way-lay and obstruct our assurance ; he is called the red dragon, Rev. xii. 3. If he cannot blot a Christian’s evidence, yet sometimes he casts such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read his evidence ; the devil envies that God should have any glory, or the soul any comfort. (3.) That we want assurance, the fault for the most part is our own ; we walk carelessly, neglect our spiritual watch, let go our hold of promises, comply with temptations ; no wonder then if we walk in darkness, and are at such a loss, that we cannot tell whether Christ be ours or not.

(3.) Assurance is very sweet ; this wine of paradise cheers the heart.

(4.) Assurance is very useful, it will put us upon service for Christ. (1.) It will put us upon active obedience ; assurance will not (as the papists say) breed security in the soul, but agility : it will make us mount up with wings, as eagles, in holy

duties; faith makes us living, assurance makes us lively; if we know that Christ is ours, we shall never think we can love him enough, or serve him enough, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

2. Assurance will put us upon passive obedience: Rom. v. 3, 5. 'We glory in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.' Mr. Fox speaks of a woman in queen Mary's days, who, when the adversaries threatened to take her husband from her, she answered, Christ is my husband: when they threatened to take away her children, she answered, Christ is better to me than ten sons; when they threatened to take away all from her, faith she, Christ is mine, and you cannot take away him from me. No wonder St. Paul was willing to be bound and die for Christ, Acts xxi. 13. when he knew that Christ loved him, and had given himself for him, Gal. iii. 20. Though I will not say, Paul was proud of his chain, yet he was glad of it, he wore it as a chain of pearl.

Qu. *But how shall I get this jewel of assurance?*

Ans. 1. Make duty familiar to you; when the spouse sought Christ diligently, she found him joyfully, Cant. iii. 4.

(2.) Preserve the virginity of conscience; when the glass is full you will not pour wine into it, but when it is empty; so when the soul is cleansed from the love of every sin, now God will pour in the sweet wine of assurance, Heb. x. 22. 'Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' (3.) Be much in the actings of faith; the more active the child is in obedience, the sooner he hath his Father's smile; if faith be ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. if it be like armour hung up, or like a sleepy habit in the soul, never look for assurance. (4.) If Christ be all, then make him so to you. (1.) Make Christ all in your understanding, be ambitious to know nothing but Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. What is it to have knowledge in physic? To be able, with Esculapius and Galen, to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the mean time to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy, to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads us to heaven? What is it to have skill in a shop, and ignorant of that commodity which doth both enrich and crown? What is it to be versed in music, and to be ignorant of Christ, whose blood makes atonement in heaven, and music in the conscience? What is it to know all the stratagems of war, and to be ignorant of the 'Prince of peace?' O make Christ all, be willing to know nothing but Christ; though you may know other things in their due place, yet know Christ in the first place; let the knowledge of Jesus

Christ have the pre-eminence, as the sun among the lesser planets.

This is the crowning knowledge, Prov. xiv. 18. ‘The prudent are crowned with knowledge.’ (1.) We cannot know ourselves unless we know Christ; he it is who lights us into our hearts, and shews us the spots of our souls, whereby we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. Christ shews us our own vacuity and indigency; and until we see our own emptiness, we are not fit to be filled with the golden oil of mercy. (2.) We cannot know God, but through Christ; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

2. Make Christ all in your affections. (1.) Desire nothing but Christ; he is the accumulation of all good things. ‘Ye are complete in him,’ Col. ii. 10. Christ is the Christian’s perfection; what should the soul desire less? What can it desire more? (2.) Love nothing but Christ; love is the choicest affection, it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow: Oh, if Christ be all, love him better than all.

Consider 1. If you love other things, when they die your love is lost; but Christ lives for ever to requite your love. (2.) You may love other things in the excess, but you cannot love Christ in the excess. (3.) When you love other things, you love that which is worse than yourselves; if you love a fair house, a pleasant garden, a curious picture, these things are worse than yourselves; if I would love any thing more intensely and ardently, it should be something which is better than myself, and that is Jesus Christ. He who is all, let him have all: give him your love who desires it most, and deserves it best.

3. Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in his strength, Eph. vi. 10. ‘Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.’ When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ: ‘Be strong in the Lord.’ Some go out to duty in the strength of parts, and go out against sin in the strength of resolutions, and they come home foiled. Alas! What are our resolutions, but like the green withs which did bind Sampson! A sinful heart will soon break these; do as David when he was to go up against Goliath, saith he, ‘I come to thee in the name of the Lord.’ So say to thy Goliath-lust, I come to thee in the name of Christ. Then we conquer, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah marcheth before us.

4. Make Christ all in your aims, do all to his glory, 1 Pet. iv. 11.

5. Make Christ all in your alliance, trust to none but Christ for salvation, the Papists make Christ something, but not at all.

And is there not naturally a spice of popery in our hearts? We would be grafting happiness upon the stock of our own righteousness; every man (saith Luther) is born with a pope in his

heart. O make Christ all in regard of recumbency, let him be our city of refuge to fly to, and your ark.

6. Make Christ all in your joy, Gal. vi. 14. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Luke i. 57. O Christian, hast thou seen the Lord Jesus? Hath this morning-star shined into thy heart with its enlightening, quickening beams? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad. Shall others rejoice in the world, and will not you rejoice in Christ? How much better is he than all other things? It reflects disparagement upon Christ when his saints are sad and drooping? Is not Christ yours, what would you have more?

*Obj.* 1. But faith one, I am low in the world, and that takes off the chariot-wheels of my joy, and makes me drive heavily.

*Ans.* But hast thou not Christ? And is not Christ all? Psal. xvi. 5, 6.

*Obj.* 2. If indeed I knew Christ were mine, then I could rejoice, but how shall I know that?

*Ans.* 1. Is thy soul filled with pantings after Christ? Dost thou desire as well water out of Christ's sides to cleanse thee, as blood out of his sides to save thee? These sighs and groans are stirred up by the Spirit of God, by the beating of this pulse, judge of the life of faith in thee.

2. Hast thou given up thyself by an universal subjection to Christ? This is a good sign that Christ is thine.

3. Be thankful for Christ; God hath done more for you in giving you Christ, than if he had set you with the princes of the earth, Psal. cxiii. 8. or had made you angels; or had given you the whole world. In short, God cannot give a greater gift than Christ; for in giving Christ he gives himself to us; and all this calls aloud for thankfulness.

*Use ult.* Here is a breast of comfort to every man that hath Christ, 'Christ is all;' it is good lying at this fountain-head. When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Saviour. 'Happy is that people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. *ult.* That servant needs not want, who hath his master's full purse at command: he needs not want who hath Christ; for 'Christ is all and in all.' What though the fig-tree doth not flourish, if thou hast Christ the tree of life, and all fruit growing there? In the hour of death, a believer may rejoice, when he leaves all, he is possessed of all; as Ambrose said to his friend, "I fear not death, because I have a good Lord." So may a godly man say, I fear not death, because I have a Christ to go to; death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at his right hand for evermore. I will end with that 1 Thess. iv, 18, 'Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.'



*PHIL. iv. 9. Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.*

WHAT the particular reason of my choice of this scripture this day is, if you compare my present station, with the intent of the apostle, in these words, you will easily understand.

These words of the apostle, being part of the close of his epistle to the Philippians, are his valediction or farewell to them : It is not unknown to you, that I must now be parted from you ; and I have pitched on this scripture, to be the close of my twenty years ministry among you.

God hath sent me among you to be a builder ; and I have chosen this text, to be a hammer to fasten, and drive home those nails of instruction and consolation, which I have been so long endeavouring to enter into you.

God hath sent me among you as a fisherman ; and I have chosen these words to be as the closing of the net. Behold ! once more the net is spread, and I am now making my last draught ; and oh that it might have the same good speed as Peter's last had, Luke v. 6. It would then pay the charges, though the net break.

God hath sent me among you as an husband-man, to plow and to sow ; and I am now come to cover what hath been sown.

What my aim is in preaching, let it be yours in hearing ; Oh that both preacher and hearers might heartily join in this desire ! This once more, God speed the plough.

In this desire and hope I drive on. In the text observe, a precept, a promise, an entail of the promise on the precept. In the precept we have, 1. An act ; ' do.' 2. An object : ' The things that you have learned, received, heard, and seen.'

The promise is in these words, ' the God of peace shall be with you.'

The entail of the promise on the precept, you have in the connective particle, ' and,' which knits them up together. Do the work, and have the reward ; obey the precept, and enjoy the promise ; ' do what you have received and heard, and the God of peace shall be with you.' Be careful of the former, and be not careful about the latter ; if the precept be performed, the promise shall be made good.

*Doct. 2.* Christians must be learners, before they can be doers. ' What you have learned, that do.'

*Doct. 2.* He hath learned well, that hath learned to do well.

*Doct.* 3. Christians eyes, as well as their ears, may help them on in religion ; or, the holy examples of ministers, should be living sermons to people. ‘ What you have seen in me.’ Therefore the apostle exhorts, Phil. iii. 17. ‘ Mark them which so walk, as you have us for an example ;’ and 1 Cor. xi. 1. ‘ Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ ;’ that is, either I have been a follower of Christ, be ye therefore followers of me ; or else be ye followers of me, as far forth as I have been a follower of Christ. Those ministers may go off the stage with honour and comfort, who have left behind them the good seed of sound doctrine, and the good favour of an holy example.

For my own part, what my doctrine and manner of life hath been among you, you are witnesses, and God also. And however, I have great reason to judge and condemn myself before the Lord, and to bewail it, that my conversation hath been less exemplary and useful, than, oh that it had been ! yet I go off from you, with this testimony upon my heart, that I have not been of those who bind heavy burdens, and lay them on other mens’ shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers ; but my endeavour hath been, to press on my own soul, and hold it out in my own practice, that word of life which I have preached to you ; and therefore am bold, in this sense, to exhort you, in the words of the apostle, ‘ Be ye followers of me, as far forth as you have seen me a follower of Christ.’

*Doct.* 4. Godly ministers when they are parted from their people, would fain leave God behind them. Though it be not unusual, when the Lord sends them away, he goes with them ; God and his messengers, do not seldom take their farewell of people together ; yet their earnest desire is, that though they must away, yet the Lord would stay.

*Doct.* 5. Faithful ministers would be messengers of peace, going, as well as coming.

As the apostles first words were to be, ‘ Peace be unto you,’ Matth. x. so some of this apostle’s last words were, ‘ the God of peace shall be with you.’

*Doct.* 6. Whenever ministers part with their people, if they can but leave godliness in them, they shall certainly leave God with them. Or,

Those that obey the gospel, whatsoever or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition.

‘ These things do,’ that is, live in the practice and power of that doctrine of godliness ‘ which you have received and heard ;’ and then fear not, ‘ the God of peace shall be with you.’

This doctrine I shall fully prove to you, after I have premised,

That the doctrine which I have preached to you, is the doc-

trine of godliness ; the sum whereof take in these four particulars :

1. That Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, came also to sanctify and purge them from their sins.

2. That those that believe in Jesus, must be careful to maintain good works, or to live a godly life.

3. That this godliness is not such a slight, and easy, and empty thing, as the mistaken world imagine ; but stands in an exact conformity of the whole man, heart and life, to the whole will of God.

4. That as whosoever believes not in Jesus, so whosoever is short of this true sincere godliness, cannot be saved.

This is the sum of that doctrine which I have preached unto you ; which being the eternal truth of God, I herein embark my own soul and life, desiring to be found in that same Jesus, and to be found walking in that same way of righteousness, which I have declared unto you.

2. That my design and aim, in preaching this doctrine to you, hath been to beget in you, and through the influence and assistance of the eternal Spirit, to bring you to this true godliness. I have travailed in birth with you, that Christ might be formed in you ; that I might leave you possessors and partakers of that grace which accompanies salvation ; that your faith might stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God ; that your repentance might be repentance unto life, not to be repented of ; that you might obey from the heart, that form of doctrine that hath been delivered unto you ; that you might stand complete in all the will of God ; that you might be holy, and harmless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation, amongst whom you must shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life ; that being rooted, and grounded in love, you might comprehend with all saints, what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God : to this end have I taught every one, and warned every one, that I might present you perfect in Christ Jesus.

3. That as far forth, as the success hath answered my design and aim upon any of our souls, so far forth stand you entitled to this glorious promise in the text, ‘ the God of peace shall be with you.’ Look how many souls there are amongst you, that live in the power and obedience of these truths you have received ; to so many can I, with confidence, give this farewell of the apostle, without ifs or ands ; ‘ the God of peace shall be with you.’ To whomsoever the Lord hath been a God of grace, to them will he be a God of peace. Whoever amongst you have

this God of grace dwelling and ruling in you, shall certainly find this God of peace dwelling and abiding with you.

These things premised, I shall now give you the full proof of the doctrine, in the following Reasons. The doctrine you remember is, those that obey the gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition.

The Reasons are,

1. The God of peace shall be with them.

2. If God be with them, all things whatsoever that befall them, shall make for their good.

*Reas.* 1. The God of peace shall be with them; these things do, live in the obedience of the holy doctrine which you have received, and the God of peace shall be with you. This glorious promise is pregnant with all the blessings that heaven and earth can afford.

If you ask, why, what is there in it? I demand of you, What is there in God? God is in the promise, all that is in God is here assured to the godly. The philosophers of old attained to some glimmerings of the excellencies that are in God, by these three ways.

1. *Per viam negationes*, conceiving of him as a Being removed, from all things, signifying imperfection: as ignorance, impotence, iniquity, corruptibility, composition, alteration, or any limits or bounds of this essence, power and glory.

2. *Per viam casualitatis*, conceiving of him, as the fountain of all other beings; and thence concluding, that whatsoever excellencies, or perfections are scattered up and down, in the whole creation, are all united in him, from whom they had their original.

3. *Per viam eminentiae*, by way of excellency; so that whatever perfections, whatever goodness is to be found in any creature, though it be not to be found in God, *formaliter*, yet there is that in him (he being the first cause of all) that doth infinitely, superabundantly answer them all. Though there be not the same specific excellencies in him, nor those very pleasures and delights issuing from him, which the creatures yield; yet there are such excellencies, such perfections, as transcend and surpass them all.

The scriptures tell us more positively and plainly, that God is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, all sufficient, holy, righteous, gracious: the portion, the protection, the rewarder, yea, the exceeding great reward of them that diligently seek him. And this is he that is in the promise. God is in the promise. I must not enlarge in this spacious field; I shall keep nearer the text, and shall confine myself to these four particulars.

1. God is in the promise, as the God of peace, as the author and bestower of peace. The greatest of blessings, is the blessing of peace, peace hath all blessings included in it. It hath possession, fruition, and security ; it hath plenty, pleasure and safety ; where there is no peace, there is no security for the holding, nor opportunity of enjoying what we have. Whatever we have, we have it as if we had it not. Peace is the greatest of blessings.

Peace with God is the most glorious of peace. What is there that is excellent, what is there that is desirable, that is not comprehended in this peace with God ? Where there is peace, there is pardon ; guilt cannot consist with this peace ; ‘ being justified by faith, we have peace with God.’ Where there is peace, there is grace and holiness ; ‘ there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’ Where there is peace, there is love and good will. As love, so peace is the union of hearts. The God of peace is with you, signifies no less than this ; the almighty God bears you good-will. These two, peace and good-will, are twins ; ‘ on earth peace, good-will towards men.’ Where there is peace, there is life, everlasting life ; internal, is the seed of eternal peace.

This peace is a portion ; peace with God is our possession of the God of peace ; this peace is a sanctuary ; if the God of peace be with us, the peace of God will keep our hearts.

Christians, in the world you must have trouble ; suppose you have, yet in him you shall have peace, who hath overcome the world, Isa. xxvi. 3. ‘ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,’ (in peace, as it is in the original) ‘ whose mind is stayed on thee,’ Ps. lxxxv. 8. ‘ I will hear what the Lord God will speak, he will speak peace to the people, and to his saints.’ What a clattering is there in the world ? what tumults and commotions are raised about the followers of Christ, as if the world were falling about their ears ? The devil speaks wrath ; evil men speak death and bonds to them ; breathing out threatenings, reproaches, persecutions against them. In the midst of all this fearful noise, I’ll hearken, saith the Psalmist, what the Lord God will speak. Whatsoever men or devils speak, I will hearken, if the Lord God speak at the same rate. Oh no, he will speak peace to his saints ; let the sons of contention do what they can, the sons of God shall be sons of peace, they shall live in peace, they shall die in peace, they dwell in peace for ever. Isa. xxxii. 17, 18. ‘ The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places ; oh how great is the peace that they have, who love thy law !’ Christians, fear not to follow God ; let not that sad word, nor

the fulfilling of it, fear you out of your duty, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' What if they do ; whilst you are able to say, I am persecuted, but I have peace ; I am poor, but I have peace ; in prison, but I have peace ; in a wilderness, but I have peace : though all the world be against me, God is at peace, my soul is in peace, what discouragement should all that be to you !

2. He that is the God of peace, is the God of power. He promises peace, and he promises no more than he can perform. He can create peace, he can make their enemies to be at peace with them. He can make a league for them with the beasts of the field ; with the lions, with the wolves, with the most brutish among the people. He can say to the proud winds and waves, Peace, be still, and they obey him. He can give them rest (from) the days of adversity ; he can give them rest (in) the days of adversity ; he can give his beloved sleep upon the points of swords and spears.

3. He that is the God of peace, is the God of patience. This is my great fear, that though God gives, yet I shall break my peace ; the God of peace with me ? oh ! this is he whom I dishonour, and disoblige daily ; by my distrusts, discontents, impatiencies, murmurings ; and what peace to such an heart ? what peace, so long as such unbelief ; so much iniquity as I find daily within me, remains upon me ? Will he, with whom no iniquity can dwell, dwell in that heart, where there is so much iniquity, by which he is provoked every day ; but he that is the God of peace, is also the God of patience ! who tho' he will not bear the iniquities of his adversaries, yet he will bear much with the infirmities of his people. Psal. lxxxix. 30. &c. 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments ; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.'

4. He that is the God of peace, is the God of hope. I have no peace in possession, whatever there be in the promise. I live in the fire, am born a man of contention. What likelihood is there, that I should ever live to see a good day ? my comforts are broken, my estate is lost, my liberty is gone ; friends I have none, enemies I have many, and mighty. I dwell in Mesech, I have my habitation in the tents of Kedar ; I am for peace they are for war ; whither ever I look, round about me, before me, behind me, on the right hand or on the left, all speak trouble and terror to me. I have no peace ; what, nor no hope of peace, neither ? where is thy God, man ? hast thou a God in thee, and yet no hope in thee ? the God of peace, and

yet no peace ! the God of hope, and yet no hope ! the God of hope will yet fill thee with joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. ‘ Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.’ Psal. xliii. 11. The God of hope will open a window of hope in the darkest times, a door of hope in the most desperate cases. The God of hope will bear up the spirits of his saints, in hope against hope ; and this hope will never disappoint them. It shall never be said, there is no peace, there is no hope, till it can be said, there is no God in Israel.

But how, or in what sense, is it to be understood, that this God of peace will be with us.

I answer in three particulars.

1. The *heart of God* will be with you. Joseph’s blessing, ‘ the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,’ will be thy portion, Deut. xxxiii. 16. What was that bush ? the church or Israel of God. What case was that bush in ? ’twas all on a light fire : ’twas all in a flame. Who was it that dwelt in the bush ? God was in the bush ; and that kept it from consuming, though not from burning. The good will of this God shall be with thee ; his love, his favour, his care. ‘ I love them that love me,’ Prov. viii. 17. ‘ The Lord loveth the righteous,’ Psal. cxlvi. 8. The love of God, is the womb of all good. Hence sprang *the morning star*, from the love of God came the son of God ; hence came that *womb of the morning*, the blessed gospel ; which is so big with glorious grace ; with light, life, pardon, peace, glory, immortality ; from the love of God came the glorious gospel of God. *The upper springs*, all spiritual and heavenly blessings ; *the nether springs*, all earthly and outward blessings, do all rise and bubble up out of this fountain, ‘ the love of God.’ ‘ The precious things of heaven ; the precious fruits brought forth by the sun ; the precious fruits put forth by the moon ; the chief things of the ancient mountains ; the precious things of the lasting hills ; the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof ;’ all these flow in with the ‘ good will of him that dwelt in the bush.’

Love is all ; the apostle tells us, Rom. xiii. our love to God is the ‘ fulfilling of the law ;’ that is, it will bring forth all that to God, all that duty, and obedience which the law requires. I may tell you, that God’s love to us is the fulfilling of the gospel, that is, it will pour down all that upon us, it will do all that for us, which the gospel promises. Look over the whole gospel ; read and study every precious leaf and line of that blessed book ; and if there be enough in all that to make thee blessed, and to encourage thee on in thy holy course, all this is thine. Thou hast that love of God with thee, which will fulfil

the gospel ; there shall not one jot or tittle fail thee of all that the gospel promises. ‘ The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.’

2. The *help of God* will be with you, the Lord will be your helper in the day of your distress. Heb. xiii. 5, 6. ‘ He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ So that we may boldly say, ‘ The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.’ He hath said ‘ I will not leave thee ;’ and therefore we may say, ‘ I will not fear ;’ He hath said ‘ I will be,’ and therefore we may boldly say, ‘ the Lord is my helper ;’ he hath said, ‘ He will not forsake, he will help :’ and who is he that shall say, There is no help for thee in thy God.

There is no man, whose case may not be so desperate, as to be above all human help. If he should cry out, as the woman to the King of Israel ; ‘ Help, O king,’ the king must answer, ‘ If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ?’ If he should cry out, ‘ Help, O man of God,’ the man of God must answer, ‘ If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ?’ If he cry out, ‘ *Help O my friends*, my wit, my policy, my purse ; all these must answer, ‘ If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall we help thee ?’ But what case is there, wherein an [*Help Lord*] will not do ?

Foolish men count their case desperate, when they come to their [*God help*] that is an usual expression to set forth the extremity and helplessness of any man’s case. When we see men even lost in any misery, and their case even utterly hopeless ; then to signify our sense of such men’s lost condition, we cry out, God help that man, God help that woman, they are lost creatures. Ay, but if men did understand and consider what the help of the Lord is, they would see there could be no case so desperate, but an [*help Lord*] might recover all, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. When David was greatly distressed, and all was gone, ‘ he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.’

Consider here two things.

1. What his case then was ; he was in great distress ; he had lost all that ever he had ; his spoils that he had taken were all gone, his corn, and his cattle, his wives and his city were all lost, he had not an habitation in all the world ; he had nothing left him but a poor army, and these were worse than lost ; they were even ready to fall upon him. ‘ The people spake of stoning him, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.’

2. What the event hereupon was : why God helped him to all he had again : ver. 19. ‘ There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters ; neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken, David recovered all.’ Hence note,



1. That a Christian when he hath lost all, hath yet a God to go to at last.

Whilst a Christian hath a God to go to, his case is never desperate ; let him but encourage himself in his God, and all will be recovered.

Sinners, triumph not over the poor people of God ; when they are at their worst, when they are brought as low as your pride and malice can lay them ; tho' they should be stript naked, and left destitute of all their comforts, tho' all the world should ride on their backs, and tread on their necks, yet rejoice not against them : tho' they fall they shall arise ; when they are at their worst, there's still help for them in their God.

3. *The presence of the Lord shall be with them.* Whithersoever they may be scattered, they shall not be scattered from their God. That promise made to Moses, *Exod. xxxiii. 14.* ' My presence shall go with thee,' belongs to all the Israel of God. [My presence] in the original, 'tis *my face* ; in the Septuagint, ' myself shall go with thee.'

The presence of God is either general or special.

By his general presence, he is every where.

1. *Per essentiam*, he fills all things.

2. *Per cognitionem*, he beholds all things.

3. *Per sustentationem*, he upholds all things.

4. *Per dominium*, he governs all things.

But to let this pass, as not so proper to our purpose.

2. There is his *special* or gracious presence, whereby he manifests himself to be with his people.

1. In some visible and standing tokens of his presence ; as in those extraordinary, the pillars of the cloud and of the fire ; and in those ordinary, the ark and the temple of old, and the ordinances of the gospel now.

2. In some inward influences, and irradiations, upon the hearts of his people.

3. In some visible and signal effects of his presence ; whereof there are very many. There are, amongst others, these two notable effects of God's gracious presence, which his people, by virtue of this promise, may with confidence expect, Conduction, Covering ; they shall be led in their way, and they shall be hid in their way.

1. Conduction : the Lord will be with them, to lead them and guide them in the way that they should go. *Psal. xxv. 9, 12.* ' The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.' *Psal. cvii. 7.* ' He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.' *Psal. v. 8.* ' Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies, make thy way straight before my face.'

The Lord leads his people in their way, chiefly by his word,

which is a light to their feet, and a lanthorn to their paths : And sometimes also by his providences, hedging up all by-ways, and leaving but one way open to them, that hath the least appearance of the way of God. So ordering the matter, that any other way that is before them, looks with too foul a face to leave any doubt upon them, whether that be the way of God or not.

It is never uncomfortable to the people of God, while they see their way before them : doubts about their way, are more perplexing than dangers in their way. When they know what God would have them do, they can chearfully trust him for any thing they are like to suffer. Dost thou meet with wolves or lions in thy way ? thou mayest bless God it is there thou meetest them, it would be ill meeting them elsewhere.

2. Covering or protection in their way : Psal. xxxi. 20. 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of man ; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.' (Thou shalt hide them in thy presence) or face ; thy light shall be their dark place to cover them : 'thou art my hiding place,' Psal. xxxii. 7. (In the secret of thy presence) the saints' hiding place is secret ; such, where neither the pride of men can find them, nor can they understand what it is. Reproaches shall not find them, persecution shall not find them, whose souls are hid in God : they are not found, when they are found ; they are hid when they seem to lie most open, and most exposed to mens' will and lust. Sinners do not understand what refuge the saints have in God. It is a great secret, a mystery to them : as the joy of the saints, the comforts of the saints, are a secret. A stranger shall not meddle with his joy : so is their safety of security ; they do not understand what kind, nor how great security ; what sure, nor what sweet repose the saints find in God. The secret of God's presence is a sure and a sweet resting-place for all his saints ; but how sure, and how sweet, no man knows, but they that enjoy it. The secret intimations of the care of God for them ; of his everlasting kindness to them ; of his governing hand, in all that befalls them, working it to their greater good ; the secret supports and refreshings darted in, as the beams of his countenance ; their secret sense that their head, their main, is in safety, though they have bruises in their heel, will yield such rest in the day of greatest adversity, as men can neither see, nor take from them. The pillar of the cloud interposed, did both hinder the Egyptian pursuit, and hide from their eyes, the comfort of that light which shined upon the camp of Israel. Moses knew what the comfort of God's presence meant, when he said, Exod. xxxiii. 15. 'If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.' It is (if considered) a great word. Israel was then in a wilderness : among

wild beasts ; among briars and thorns ; in a weary pilgrimage ; but they had God among them : the Lord was carrying them to Canaan, the land of their rest, a land flowing with milk and honey ! but Moses prays, ‘ If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.’ We had rather be where we are, in a wilderness with God, than go to Canaan, and leave our God behind us. If thy presence go with us, we are willing to go, when thou wilt, whither thou wilt, which way thou wilt ; tho’ by the tents of Edomites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Hagarens ; though through the armies of Anakims, Zamzummims : we will go any where, so God go with us. The absence of God makes a Canaan worse than a wilderness : the presence of God makes a wilderness better than a Canaan : and this presence of God shall be the lot of all his saints.

*Reason 2.* If God be with you, all shall make for you : all providential occurrences and events whatsoever, all difficulties, straits, disasters, disappointments whatsoever, that may come upon you, shall make for your good, Rom. viii. 31. ‘ If God be with us, who can be against us ?’ Who can be against us ? that is, none can be against us : or if any be, yet those that are against you shall be for you. Gen. xlii. 36. ‘ Joseph is not, and Simeon is not (said old Jacob), and must Benjamin away too ! all these things are against me :’ but yet, as old as he was, he lived to see all making for him, Rom. viii. 26. ‘ We know all things shall work together for good to those that love God.’ This is such a promise, as, if it were thoroughly believed, would set our feet on the necks of all our fears and dangers ; and will prove the truth of Sampson’s riddle, ‘ Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong, sweetness.’

Now because there is so great encouragement to godliness in it, I shall spend the more time in enlarging upon it ; and shall shew,

1. What those things are, which are especially intended in that comprehensive term, ‘ all things.’
2. What that good is, which these things shall work to.
3. To whom these things shall work for good.
4. How these things shall work for good.
5. That they shall undoubtedly work for good to them that love God.

1. What those things are, which are especially intended, in that comprehensive term, ‘ all things.’ Some there are, as Augustine with others, who understand it universally, of all things whatsoever, whether good or evil, extending it even to the sins of the saints. It is true, God doth often bring good out of these evils ; making use of former sins to be forces against future : There is nothing that doth make the sinner more weary and wary of sin, than sin itself ; the review of what we have done

doth ofteneſt fright us from doing ſo any more. When you look back on ſin, and ſee its face, (for ſin carries its face in its back) you will fear it the more, whenever you meet it again. There is no argument doth more effectually humble and break the heart, and make it more fearful and watchful againſt ſin, than the ſhame and the ſmart of thoſe ſins we have fallen by. This is true, God doth often make this uſe of ſin, to be its own cure : and therefore it is not ſeldom ſeen, that the chief of ſinners have come to be the chief of ſaints. Yet, beſides, that this is not the ſubject matter that the apoſtle is here treating of ; let thoſe that bring ſin within the compaſs of this promiſe, and make this to run into the ſenſe of it ; that even all the ſins of the ſaints ſhall work for their good, let ſuch tell us, how, or in what way it is imaginable, that the ſinful decays of ſuch who backſlide from God, and never recover to their former life and vigour, but live and die in a languiſhing ſtate of ſoul ; let them tell us, how ſuch ſins can be imagined to work for their good : till then, we muſt enter our diſſent from this interpretation.

This then is not the ſenſe of the promiſe, that all ſins ſhall work together for good.

And yet if it were, it would be but a poor argument, to take the more liberty to ſin, becauſe God will turn it to good ; this would be even as rational, as for a man to tear his fleſh, break his bones, pluck out his eyes, burn his houſe, &c. becauſe God will turn all his ſuffering to good : he is little better than mad, that would not conclude ſuch a man out of his wits.

Others reſtrain it to the evil things that befall the ſaints, not the *turpia*, but the *triftia*, their ſufferings and afflictions ; to that vanity, and thoſe vexations they are in bondage under, and under which, with the whole creation, they groan and travail in pain, waiting for their redemption ; of which the apoſtle had been treating in the former part of the chapter. And yet while they pitch the ſenſe, eſpecially on ſuch things as theſe, they grant it may be extended to all other things, ſin only excepted ; *ad omnes res, creaturas, eventus, tum ſecundos, tum adverſos* : To all things and events, whether prosperous or afflictive. So Pareus with others.

And theſe I take to have hit the right. All heavy things, all the ſufferings and afflictions of the ſaints ; and not only theſe, but all things elſe whatſoever, that in the whole courſe of Providence be their lot or portion ; all the dealings of God with them, all the diſpenſations of providence towards them, ſhall all work for their good.

2. What is that good, which theſe things work to the ſaints ; or in what ſenſe all things may be ſaid to work good to them ? The ſenſe in general is this : They ſhall all walk to their welfare, they ſhall all happen to them for the better : there ſhall

nothing befall them, but one time or other they shall have reason to say, It was well for me, that it was thus with me. The wisdom and goodness of God did cut out such portions continually for me, did lead me through such a series and succession of cases and events, which though I could not understand, yet now I see that every condition, every contingency and occurrence of my life, through which Providence led me, was useful, and could not well have been wanted, but it would have been the worse for me. Thus in the general.

Particularly, for the fuller understanding what good it is that all things work to, consider, That there is a twofold good of the saints ; such as they obtain and enjoy, whilst they are *in via* in their way or course ; or such as they shall obtain, when they are *in termino*, when they are gotten to the end of their way, when they are come to their place. Or thus ; there is a threefold good of the saints, temporal, spiritual, eternal.

1. Temporal good, or our *bona corporis*, the outward good things of this life, which may serve and please, and delight us in these days of our pilgrimage ; which may abide with us, and attend us to our graves, but there will take their leave of us.

2. Spiritual good ; or our *bona animæ*, and those are either, 1. External, as the ordinances of God ; the light, liberties, and privileges of the gospel ; the society, and communion of saints, and our peaceful and plentiful enjoying of them. 2. Internal, as spiritual grace, faith, love, hope, patience, &c.

3. Eternal good, or that glory and joy, that everlasting rest and peace, the possession of that inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that is reserved in heaven for us.

Now here note these things.

1. That our *bona corporis*, our outward good things, are only good for us, as they are conducive *ad bonum spirituales*, to the good of our souls. The *bona viæ*, are only good in the event, when they tend to the *bonum patriæ*. This world is but a nursery for eternity ; we are planted in this, in order to our transplanting into the other world ; and whatever we have here, is either good or evil, according to the respect that it bears to hereafter : As far forth as our immortal part is improved by these perishing things, so far forth only are they good for us. He that hath this world's goods, and is not hereby made more rich towards God ; he who prospers in this world, and yet his soul doth not prosper ; much more, he whose worldly fulness becomes the emptiness, and leanness of his soul : Are these good things good for him ? Is he in prosperity upon a true account, whose soul prospers not ? It is not ever good to prosper in the world ; it cannot be universally said, it is good to be rich, it is good to be in health, it is good to be in honour, it is good to be at liberty ; the contrary may sometimes be true ; it is good to

be poor, to be sick, to be in disgrace, to be in bonds; the necessity of our souls doth not seldom require it: then alone it is good to be full, and to abound, when our outward abundance farthereth our spiritual welfare.

Christians, could we receive this truth, that our outward good things are only good for us, as far forth as they conduce to our spiritual good: could we receive this truth, and live under the power of it, what a different judgment should we then have of all these worldly matters, from what we have? and how strangely would the course of this world be then changed? Would there then be such a violent and eager pursuing these carnal things? Would there then be such whining and complaining, and murmuring at every cross providence? We would then say, this may be good for me; good for my soul, how sad soever it looks.

2. That external spiritual good things, the ministry, and ordinances of the gospel, &c. are so far good for us, as they conduce to our internal spiritual good: and they being ordinarily so, it must be concluded, that ordinarily it is good for us that we enjoy them, and be not deprived of them. God may see the cutting Christians short of those privileges, and liberties, to be sometimes needful for them; and then even this also makes for their good; whereof more anon.

3. That our inward spiritual good, is good for us, so far forth as it tends to our eternal good: and therefore grace is ever good for us. It is ever true; it is good to be holy, good to be humble, to be in the fear of God, and to flourish in his grace. We may have too much money, too much credit, but we can never have too much grace. Our greatest flourishing and fruitfulness in grace, will certainly abound to our more full reward.

4. Note, That this is the plain sense and meaning of the promise, 'all things shall work for good,' that is, whatsoever befalls, shall certainly promote our internal and eternal welfare; and as far forth as the outward privileges of the gospel, yea, and the good things of this life, conduce towards this, all shall work for these also. If it be good for us to be rich, if it be good for us to be in honour, good for us to be at liberty; good for our souls, good in reference to our eternal state; if it be good for us that we enjoy the ministry of the gospel; there shall nothing befall us, that shall hinder; there shall be nothing wanting to us, that might further this our good.

The sum is, That all providential dispensations shall be so ordered, that we shall want nothing but what it is better to want than have: we shall suffer nothing but what we cannot well be without, but what the good of our souls requires; and that which we do possess, and that which we do suffer, shall not fail of bringing about its end, the advancing our eternal good.

And if this be the meaning, what a glorious promise is this? What can any rational man desire more? nothing shall befall him but shall be for his good: he shall be deprived or kept short of nothing, but what he had better be without than have. He that is unsatisfied with this promise, it is either from lust or unbelief; either he doth not believe, that God is true, and will perform this word: or else it is because his lust must be satisfied, though with the denial of his reason and interest; he that desires an estate in the world, ease, pleasure, liberty; or any thing else upon any other terms, but as they may be for his real good, hath as much lost his wits as his faith: and he that will take upon him to know what is good for him, better than God, may as well take upon him to govern the world. You may with as good reason, desire a fever, or a dropfy, that you may have the pleasure of your drink; as for the pleasures that carnal things would bring you in, to desire them, when they would be a snare to your souls.

3. To whom these things shall work for good; to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose: to the people of God, who you see, are here described by their election and vocation, 'the called according to his purpose,' and their sanctification, 'they that love God.' Love God, and you will live in the obedience of his whole will: These are the people, to whom this promise is made; prove your calling and election, prove your sanctification, and you may write your names in this glorious promise; 'all things shall work for your good.'

To those that are rebels, and reprobates from God, all things shall work together for evil. Whilst things hurtful work together for good to the saints; all good things work together for the hurt of sinners: their peace hurts them, their plenty hurts them, their pleasure hurts them; yea, both their prosperity and adversity, their plenty and their poverty, their pleasure and their trouble, their honour and disgrace, every thing that befalls them, turns to their prejudice. Their prosperity destroys them; their table is their snare; their pleasures are their plagues; and their very punishments are turned into sin; every thing that befalls them, heightens and hardens them in their wickedness, and ripens them for vengeance. God is not with them, and therefore nothing prospers with them. God is with his saints, and therefore nothing comes amiss to them, but all for their greater advantage: Christians, this is your portion, and your peculiar, wherein the men of this world shall neither partake with you, nor be ever able to deprive you of it.

4. How all things shall work for their good: in special, how shall the evil things, the sufferings of this life be for their good: How can this be? must we misbelieve our senses, lay down our

reasons, ere we can believe the scriptures? Must we call evil good, and good evil? Must we count darkness light, and light darkness? Is pleasure pain, and pain pleasure? Is loss gain, and gain loss? Is ease torment, and torment ease? Doth religion make things cease to be what they are, and to be what they are not? or at least, must we believe, that darkness is the mother of light, that good is the daughter of evil? Can we gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Can darkness give light, or death itself bring forth life? Must we say, that contraries no longer destroy, but produce each other, and that the womb brings forth its own destruction? How can these things be?

But must God give a reason of his actions, or else they are not! though evil cannot bring forth good, darkness cannot bring forth light? yet, cannot God bring forth good out of evil, light out of darkness? though darkness cannot bring forth light; evil cannot bring forth good by a natural causation; yet cannot God make evil an occasion of good? Though it doth not work efficiently, yet can it not work objectively neither to it? Though the torment the medicine puts men to, be not ease, yet may it not work towards ease? May not the storm, though it help not, yet hasten the labourer on his work, the traveller on his way? May not the darkness of the night, make more diligent in the day? May not sickness teach men more temperance, and poverty more frugality?

But to proceed more distinctly; how can the saints evil things work to their good? That they do so, cannot be denied, unless we deny, not only scripture, but common sense, and experience; but how comes it to pass?

I answer in four particulars;

1. The afflictions and tribulations of the saints are the way that leads them on to the possession of that good, which God hath intended to them; afflictions are the way of the kingdom; the cross is the way to the crown, Acts xiv. 22. 'Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.' Psal. lxxvi. 11, 12. 'Thou broughtest us into the net, thou hast laid affliction upon our loins, thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.'

Observe it; their troubles are their way to their triumph; their very falling into the net, their way to escape. Their enemies boast; Escape! Arise! yes, let them free themselves with such hopes while they will, we have them sure enough, we have them under foot, we have them in the net; if this be their way, we will keep them in their way long enough; now we have them down, they shall not be able to rise. Ay, but yet it appears, through all this the Lord led them forth into a wealthy place, The high-way of the proud is it not



their more ready way to the dust, than the dust of saints is their sure way to honour. When Israel were to go to Canaan, they must take the brick kilns, the Red-sea, the wilderness, Jordan, in their way ; could any one have imagined, that the bondage, the straits they were under, the doubling their tasks, the cruelty of their task-masters, their encloser at the Red-sea, did mean any good to them ? yet, How fell it out at last ? their darkest dispensations had light in their latter end ; their greatest bondage leads on to their greatest liberty.

Every cross providence, is a step to the accomplishment of the promise ; the wheel is ever moving on its end ; it moves still forwards, even when it seem to go quite backwards ; as the river, by its many turnings and windings, forwards and backwards, is still in motion to the sea, when its seems to be running quite contrary.

Christians, if ever the salvation of God seems to be removed farther off from you ; if the work of God should at any time seem to go backwards, if cross winds should turn the whole course, so that you appear rather to be marching back to Egypt than on to Canaan, yet be not discouraged ; though your way be unlikely, and unpromising way, though you be led about forwards and backwards, yet still you are making on ; though the lesser wheels be never so cross and contrary in their motions, yet the great wheel is still moving right on to your blessed and hoped end. God intends your good, your spiritual good here, your eternal good hereafter : and believe it now, for he will let you see it hereafter, that those very things which most threaten your miscarriage, and a total abortion of your hopes, are made all to concur to the bringing them about, and to your more full and speedy possession of them.

Note farther here two things.

1. All things work ; not they shall work, *de futuro*, but *de presenti*, they do work : as the apostle says, ‘ The mystery of iniquity ; ’ so we may say, the mystery of the saints redemption doth already work ; the work is already on the wheel, and every wheel is on its motion for you ; not only your brethren, the saints and angels, who all are praying for your peace, and seeking your good, but your enemies also, the dragon with all his armies, are at work for you : all the councils of this world, are already sitting upon the very matter : God hath called them together for this purpose, the Pope, with all his conclave ; the Jesuits, Priests, Monks and Friars, with all their convent ; yea, the devil, with all his conclave of hell, are all at work for the good of saints. It is true, they mean not, nor intend any such thing, their designs are against you ; they count they are working for themselves ; as it is said concerning the Assyrian, Isa. x. 6, 7. God sent him forth upon a design of

his own, to execute his counsel, in the punishing of hypocrites ; to purge out the chaff from the wheat ; nevertheless, he meaneth not so, nor doth his heart think so : the Assyrian minds not what God's design is, but follows his own design ; fights for himself, and spoils for himself ; but God's design is still carried on by him, though he thinks not of it.

All the events in the world are driving the same way, every disease or infirmity that comes upon you, every loss that you sustain, every scoff or reproach that you suffer ; the shame in your faces, the sorrow of your hearts, the torment in your bowels, the aches in your bones, are all working your good. All the changes of your conditions, your fair weather, and your foul, your sun-shine and your clouds, your plenty and your wants, your eases and your pains, your liberties and your prisons, are all making for you : your good is already working by all these things.

See Christians, what an harvest of blessedness is growing up to you, out of this promise ; the seed is already sowing, your good is already working : God is at work, the whole creation is at work, men and angels, good men and evil men, friends and enemies, heaven and earth, and hell, are already engaged to work your good.

2. They work together, that is, as some understand it, they work together with God ; all these second causes work together with the first cause ; or as others, they work together amongst themselves. There is such a concatenation and concentrating of all these second causes, in the same design, that however they seem to thwart, and cross, and destroy some of them, what the others build and advance, yet they are all united in their end ; they jointly contribute to the weal of the saints. Though, if I mistake not, this latter be the more sense of the two : Yet I know no reason why both may not be understood. In the hand, and under the conduction of Providence, all these lower things concur and co-operate in the good of the church.

By the way, observe, what an harmony there is in all the works of providence ; The most cross and thwarting occurrences, do all conspire, and go hand in hand, to bring about the same end. As the differing virtues of various drugs do all concur to make up the medicine ; As the differing sounds of several strings or instruments, do altogether make up the melody ; As the differing colours in a picture, the dark as well as the brighter, do jointly contribute to the beauty of the piece ; no less do the most contrary, and contradictory actions and events, both make up the beauty of providence, and jointly subserve that one end, to which, by an unseen hand, and an all seeing eye, they are directed, and intended.

2. The evil things that befall the saints, come upon them to

keep out worse things. Wherever the cross comes, if it had not come, something worse might? The cross may be a means to secure from the curse: the curse was slain on the cross of Christ; and our cross also hath its use, to the delivering us from it.

Cor. xi. 32. 'We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;' *periissem nisi periissem*: I had died, if I had not suffered; it is more men's cases, besides his that spake it; it is no bad exchange to have a cross instead of a curse.

3. The evil things of the saints, prepare them for better things; that they may work good for them, they are working them to good; working out their sin and iniquity, wearying them of sin. Hosea ii. 6. 'I will hedge up her ways with thorns, then shall she say I will return:' sin brought in afflictions into the world, and afflictions help to carry sin out; the cross, to which sin was once nailed, is now nailed to sin: the saints can seldom be meddling with sin, but they find it too heavy for them. Our Lord beats the devil with his own weapons, by those very means, purging his saints, by which he endeavours to pollute them; making those very persecutions, by which he labours to force them from holiness, to fix them in it.

Christians comfort your hearts; those floods that are cast against you, shall but wash you the whiter, and make you more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: your purgatory prepares you for your paradise. No unclean thing must enter in thither: and you are not like to be made so clean, as by falling into the hands of the unclean. The saints never look so well, like sheep come from the washing, as when they come up from the pots, their very black makes them comely.

Oh Christians! what a comfort would it be, if your experience might come in, and seal to this truth: if you could say, thus it hath been with me; 'Before I was afflicted I went astray: I was proud, and vain, and wanton, and slothful, and carnal but now have I kept thy word.'

Sinners, whatever your mind be in persecuting the saints, never think to debauch them by it; if that be your aim, you mistake your course; the living spark which God hath kindled in them will not be blown out, but be blowing up, by your puffing at it; the dirt you cast upon them, doth but scour them the brighter. You take the best course you can, to keep them closer to the Lord, and his way: the warm sun will more hazard the loss of their garments, than the blustering wind: let them alone, the Spirit of the Lord within them, will be too hard for hell, with all its black regiments; and will not only secure

them, but advance them yet higher, by all their assaults. These stars shine the brightest when the night is darkest: when you have done your worst, it will be the better with them; though they will not thank you, yet they will thank God, for what they have suffered by you. If this be your aim, to make them like yourselves, you may set your hearts at rest, and give over such a vain attempt: your fury is like to do as little to force them, as your virtues are to invite them to a compliance with you. Your faces are too foul to draw them into your love, and yet not fierce enough to drive them into your fear. Satan, try thy utmost strength and skill, and if thou lovest not by thine own play at last, if thou findest not the poor people of God gotten nearer heaven, by thy attempts of plucking them down to hell, then let thy lies be believed, before the everlasting gospel.

Christians, make me not ashamed in this same confident boasting of you; yea, contradict not your God, by suffering yourselves to be corrupted by the evil men. The Lord himself hath adventured deep upon your integrity and steadfastness: The honour of his truth and faithfulness lies at stake, he hath said, 'That they shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord,' Ps. cxii. 7. He hath said, 'By this shall their iniquity be purged, and this shall be all the fruit, to take away their sin.' God hath said, 'All things shall work together for good to them.' They shall not be the worse, but the better, for all that befalls them: they shall love me and my holy ways the more, they shall cleave unto me the closer, they shall be made more pure, and more tender: by all they suffer for righteousness sake; they shall love conscience, and their integrity, and faithfulness to it never the worse, for that it hath cost them so dear, but shall prize it the more: and be the more wary and tender, how they pollute and turn aside from it. God hath ventured deep on you; make not him a liar: the devil and his instruments will be ready to say, concerning you, as once he did to the Lord concerning his servant Job; Put them into our power, let us have the handling of them a while, and thou shalt quickly see, what truth there is in them, or what trust there is to them; they will curse thee to thy face; they will deny thee to thy face, they will eat their own words, they will be ashamed of their God, their godliness and confidence. Let God be true, Christians, and the devil a liar; be living commentaries on this blessed text; let the world, and their black prince see, that they cannot make you miserable, because they cannot make you sinners like themselves: that you are still the more upright, for falling into the hands of a crooked generation: let them see, that though your God will not suffer you, yet you are contented, to serve him for nothing. That though this hedge be removed from you, yet your heart is not removed from him; be able to

say, ' Though all this be come upon us, our heart is not turned back, neither have we declined thy way.' Let your standing and increasing in the grace of God, and abounding in the works of righteousness, be a standing witness for God in the world, and a seal to his scriptures, and in special to the glorious truth of this text.

4. The evil things of the saints, prepare better things for them; their sufferings go into their reward: ' As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ: ' every suffering comes with a comfort in its belly; and the sweet is so great as swallows up the bitter; it is a hundred-fold that the saints gain by all their losses in this life; but how great shall their reward be in heaven. 2 Cor. iv. 17. ' Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.' They shall not only have weight for weight, measure for measure, their load of glory for their load of sufferings; but they shall have over-weight, over-measure; good measure pressed down, heaped together and running over, shall then be given unto them: according to their deep poverty, shall be the height of their riches; according as their blackness hath been in their houses of bondage, shall be their brightness in the land of promise; ' for all thy shame thou shalt have double: ' the double of thy reproach in renown, the double of thy tears in triumphs, all thy bottled tears shall be returned in flaggons of joy; yea, in rivers of eternal pleasure.

By this time, Christians, you see what glory there is in this good word: ' All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' And that none may have the face to say all this is but conceit; I shall, in the next place, bring in clear and undeniable evidence, that it is certainly and unquestionably so as hath been said: and therefore know,

5. That all things do, and shall certainly work ' for good to them that love God.' This (besides the testimony of the scripture) I shall make evident from these three propositions:

1. There is a Divine Providence that governs the world.
2. The design of providence, is the accomplishment of the good purpose and promise of God.
3. The providence of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end.

1. There is a Divine Providence which governs the world; the Epicureans, who deny Providence, and leave all on chance and fortune, may as well deny that there is a God, which yet they are ashamed to stand to. Of Epicurus himself it was said, *Quem nihil pudendum pudet, pudet tamen Deum negare.*

It can be no way reconcileable to the infinite wisdom of God, who made this glorious fabric with the various creatures therein, either not to determine them to their ends, or else to take no

care for their accomplishing those ends they are determined to. The whole current of scripture is so plain in these matters, that he that runs may read. Let the following scriptures, (amongst others) be considered.

Psal. xcvi. 1. 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the isles be glad.' Psal. lxxvii. 15, 16. 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season : thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing.' Psal. xxxvi. 6. 'Thou preservest man and beast.' Psal. lxxv. 6, 7. 'Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another, Amos iii. 6. 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Psal. xvii. 13, 14. 'Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword ; from men which are thy hand.' The confessions of those infidels, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius speak the same. Dan. iv. 35. 'All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?' Dan. vi. 26. 'I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble, and fear, before the God of Daniel ; for he is the Living God, and stedfast for ever ; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed ; and his dominion shall be even to the end : He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and earth ; who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.'

But more distinctly, the Lord governs all inanimate and sensitive creatures in their actions ; he orders the stars in their courses. The stars in their courses he made to fight against Sifera. -He governs the winds and the floods ; he bringeth forth the winds out of his treasures, he rides upon the wings of the wind. He maketh the clouds his chariots, he sitteth on the floods ; the thunder, and the hail, and the rain, and the frosts, are all at his command. He giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth the ice like morsels ; he sets bounds to the sea, which it shall not pass ; the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea ; yea the stones and dust of the earth, are all at his beck.

More especially, he rules and governs the men of this world. He sits in all the councils of men, though they see him not : he orders all their decrees : There is no decree can pass, unless God gives his vote. He rules in all the actions of men ; even those things that are acted through our improvidence, come not to pass without the providence of God. He rules in all the changes that are in the world ; he changes the times and the seasons : he changes kingdoms and governments ; he removeth kings,

and setteth up kings ; he makes war and creates peace : he bendeth the bow, and breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in funder, and burneth the chariots in the fire ; peace and war, health and sickness, plenty and famine, life and death, are all the disposures of his hand. He orders all the events and casualties of the world ; even from the greatest to the smallest. Without him not a sparrow shall fall, nor a hair of the head shall perish ; though there be to men, yet to the Lord there are no casualties, or contingencies. But all things come to pass according as his hand, and council had before determined.

2. The design of providence (as it respects the elect) is the accomplishment of God's good purpose and promise. Providence governs the world, and the purpose and promise governs providence. All the works of providence hath *rationem mediorum ad finem*. God doth nothing in vain : it is not consistent with the wisdom of God, to do any thing for nothing. God would have his people look farther than to the things that are before them, because all those things have a farther aspect themselves. All the works of providence have a double aspect ; they look backward, to the purpose and promise ; and they look forward, to the end for which they are ; as they look backward, so they have truth in them, exactly answering the purpose and promise from which they have their birth. As they look forward, to their end, so they have good in them, and that good (their subservience to their end) is the reason of their being. Here note two things.

1. That the subserviency of things to their end, is the goodness of them ; if the end be good, the means must (as such) be good also ; if what God hath purposed and promised be good, then all things that fall in between, having the respect of means to their accomplishment, must upon that account be good. If our crosses and afflictions, to subserve the bringing about of God's good will, and good word, we must say concerning them, ' good are the works of the Lord.' It is not, how any thing looks or feels at present, but what it means, and to what it tends. If the portion be bitter, and yet it tends to health ; if the messenger be ill-looking, and ill-favoured, and yet comes upon a good errand, you may bid them welcome. And thus all the providences of God are good. If you should ask of any providence, wherefore art thou come ? comest thou peaceably ? comest thou for good ? they must all answer, yes, peaceably, for good, and no hurt. 'Tis but to help all that good into thy hand, which hath been in the heart, and hath proceeded out of the mouth of thy God that loves thee. There is not a messenger of Satan that comes to buffet thee, but is also a messenger from God, that comes to thee for good. The very thorns in

thy flesh shall serve thee for plaisters, thine eye-sores shall be thine eye-salve, and thy very maladies thy medicines.

2. That this relative goodness of all the works of providence is the reason of their being. 'Therefore God doth what he doth, and hereby he may do what he hath said and intended. I do not say that the reason of God's taking this or that means, is always from any thing in itself, or for its natural tendency to such an end above any thing else; God hath his choice of means, he can chuse here or there at pleasure, can make use of what he will to serve his design; but the reason why things are, is this, God in his wisdom, saw their ordinability to this good end, and thereupon in his providence, he orders and brings them to pass.

So that now, whatever befalls a Christian, he hath this to allay and take off the grievousness and sharpness of it; this had never been, but for the good will and good word of the Lord to me. The Lord God hath said he will bless me, and do me good; he will heal me, and sanctify, and save me, and now he is about it; by this, he is working that salvation for me.

Christians, you have no reason to say, if the Lord be with me, why am I thus? why so poor, why so pained, why so persecuted, so scorned and trampled upon? sure, if the Lord had meant my good, it would have been better than 'tis with me: no, no, it is because the Lord is with thee, and means thee well, that he deals in this manner with thee. The design of his providence towards thee, is the accomplishment of his promise.

3. The providence of God shall never fail to accomplishing its end. There is nothing wanting that might give us the fullest assurance hereof. For,

1. The providence of God hath power with it. He is the Almighty that hath promised: he that ruleth in the earth dwelleth in the heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. 'Our God is in heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. I will work, and who shall let it?' Isa. xliii. 'Who can stay his hand, or say to him, what dost thou?' were it not for our unbelief, our case would be still the same, in greatest difficulties, as when the coasts are most clear. We might say of difficulties as the Psalmist of darkness, 'there is no darkness with thee, to thee the day and night are both alike.' Difficulties are no difficulties with thee, nor is there difference betwixt hard and easy. He can save with many, or with few; and with none as well as with some. We once read he had too many, but never that he had too few, to bring about his work. Oh how do we disparage the power of God, when our difficulties make us doubt? Is he God, and not man? Is he spirit and not flesh? Wherefore then dost thou doubt? whatever God hath said he can do: believe he is a God, and thou wilt never say, how can these things be?



2. The providence of God hath wisdom with it; he is the only wise, he is the all-wise God; 'He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,' 2 Pet. ii. 9. He knoweth what is good for his saints, and when it will be in season; he understandeth what is proper and pertinent to every case. What is proper to every purpose, to every people, to every person, and for every season; he knows when it is a season to abate, and when to exalt; when to afflict, and when to deliver; when to put on the yoke, and when to take off the yoke; when to pull down, and when build up; every thing is beautiful in its season. If mercies come out of season, mercies would be no mercies; and if troubles come in their season, troubles should be no troubles; he knows the best method, and means to his end; the fittest means; he sees sometimes, the unfittest to be the fittest; the most unlikely unpromising means, do often best serve God's end.

*Christians*, if you would receive every dispensation, as coming from the hands of the wise God; you would never quarrel with your lot, nor say of any thing that befalls, I might be happy, but this stands in my way. If you would give God leave to be wiser than you, you would say wherever you are, it is good for me to be here, this is my way to my rest.

3. The providence of God hath faithfulness with it, Ps. xxv. 10. 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant, and his testimonies.' Psal. cxi. 8. His works are done in truth. God's works may be said to be done in truth in a double sense.

In reality, in fidelity. 1. In reality, not in specie, or in shew only, but indeed God's comforts are comforts indeed: God's salvation, is salvation indeed. The devil will come with his gifts, comforts and deliverances: but they are for the most part, but *spectra*, like himself, shews and apparitions: quite another thing than what they seem to be: sinners comforts, deliverances, enjoyments, wherewith the devil feeds them, do leave them in as poor a case, and worse than they found them: you will never thank the devil for his kindness, when you have proved them what they are. If you do not find yourselves as fast bound in the midst of all your liberties; if you be not wrap'd up in as many sorrows, after all the joys he hath procured to you; if the glittering glories, the glaring pleasures he entices you by and entertains you with, prove not trash and dirt, and mere lies in the end, then say, the devil hath forgotten his trade of lying; the devil's works will be even like himself, false and deceitful. But God is true, and all his works are done in truth.

2. In fidelity, his works are according to his word, 1 Kings viii. 24. 'Thou hast spoken with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled

with thine hand, in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' Ps. cxix. Not only in thy faithfulness thou hast saved me, in thy faithfulness thou hast comforted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast succoured me; but in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me: in thy faithfulness thou hast humbled, and broken me, and cast me down. The promise of God is, that we shall want nothing; we shall neither want his staff, nor his rod; neither comforts nor crosses: neither joys nor sorrows; we cannot well want either, and we shall want neither, because God is faithful. You may not only write down with the apostle, 'God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear.' But you may write also, God is faithful, and will not suffer you to want a temptation. When it is seasonable, your hearts shall be glad; and if need be, for a season you shall be in heaviness. God is faithful, he will ever be true to himself, and therefore to you. 2 Tim. ii. 9. 'He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.' Should he be false to his people, he cannot be true to himself, to his purpose and promise: his word is not yea and nay. God is not as a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent; that he should say, and unsay: that he should say, and not do: you may write God's name upon every word he hath spoken, you may write his name (I am) upon all that he hath said: it shall be.

Now Christians, put these three particulars together, and if you cannot spell out the conclusion out of them, 'the providence of God will certainly accomplish his good purpose and promise concerning you:' You are of little understanding as well as of little faith.

If God governs the world and nothing comes to pass but by his providence; if providence governs according to God's purpose and promise: if providence cannot fail of accomplishing both.

If God be almighty, and can, if God be wise and knows how, if God be faithful and true, let the devil if he can, with all his sophistry, evade the conclusion, 'That he will certainly do all that good for you, which he hath purposed and promised:' If God be not able to perform, he is not almighty: if he mistake his way, if he use impertinent, improper means, he is not the all-wise God. If he doth not actually perform what he is able and knows how to do, when he hath said it, he ceases to be the true God: So that the matter is brought plainly to this issue; if God be God, if God be the all-wise God, if God be the true and faithful God, this word which he hath spoken, 'All things shall work together for good to those that love God,' shall not fail of its accomplishment in its season.

Having thus proved the doctrine, I shall add a few words by way of caution.

*Caution 1. Limit not the Lord to your time and way; God will make good his word, but you must give him leave to take his own season: 'He that believeth, shall not make haste.'* Believe God, but do not prejudge nor precipitate, lest you fall into temptation. Put no more into the promise, neither for matter nor circumstance, than God hath put in it: put not that into the promise, which God hath not put in it, lest you miss and come short of that which God hath put in it. Let others mistakes and miscarriages be warnings to you: till God hath manifestly said, do not you say, this is the time; build not your confidence on conjectures, your faith on the strongest presumptions, lest your faith prove but a fancy, and your confidence your confusion: make not the promise of God of none effect, by looking for its effect out of season.

Believe not yourselves into fidelity: Consider, Acts i. 7. 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which God hath put in his own power. Study the word and its commentary, the works of God, but be sober in your conclusions.

This you may safely depend upon, and this will be enough, if you have no more: God will make good his word to you, sooner or later, in one time or other, in one way or other; in the best time, in the best way, in the appointed time, the vision shall speak, and shall not lie; Hab. ii. 3. 'Though it may tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry.' At least, at the ends of the days, when you shall stand in your lot, when you shall be gotten on the banks of Canaan, and shall thence look back on the promises and providences of God, you shall see and say, God is faithful, there hath not failed one word of all that he hath promised: Now I understand, though once I could not, how every wheel was turning, every instrument was moving, every event was working towards my good and everlasting welfare.

2. *Let not your expectation cause an abortion.* Let not your looking for mercy hinder the working of your affliction: it is not seldom, and the Lord grant it be not too common a case, that our door of hope becomes a door of sin. We do not set ourselves with that seriousness to humble, to purge ourselves from our iniquities, as we would do, did we apprehend our case more desperate; our fears and our sorrows have not their kindly work upon us, our hope hinders it. We might have been more broken hearted, had it not been for our hopes of building up: as it is with a person who conceives himself to be dying, he then falls to praying and repenting, and setting his heart in order, because he must die; but upon a little hope of recovery, he lays by his dying thoughts and preparations.

*Christians,* When ever you are under afflictions take heed

that your expectation of deliverance be near, put it not so much the farther off. Watch narrowly over yourselves, and look diligently to it, that your hope of redemption do not harden your hearts, nor hinder your humiliation and repentance. Hope in God, and wait for the promise of his coming : but know, that till the rod hath done its work, it is not like in mercy to be laid by ; and it is better to be continued in the furnace, than to be brought forth with your dross unpurged away.

By the way, learn hence two things.

1. Rejoice in this promise of God : Hath the Lord put in thy name here : let thine heart say, it is enough. Be more joyful in this, that God hath thus undertaken the care of thee, than if God had wholly put thee to thine own hand ; giving thee power to help, and liberty to chuse for thyself. In what wilt thou rejoice, if not in this, that the whole creation is engaged to do thee a kindness, to help thee into the possession of thy God ? 'Thou mayest now not only submit to, but thankfully embrace every providence, knowing upon what errand it comes to thee, for good, and not for hurt. Thou mayest now triumph not only in the consternations, but in the triumphs of thine enemies. Whether they ride over thy back, or thou tread over their neck, 'tis all one, the issue will be the same. Thy troubles and thy consolations differ only in their countenance ; with whatever grim face thy afflictions lock, there are smiles under ; learn to see thro' them, and thou mayest see light on the further side. Believe this word, thou mayest read it written upon every thing that befalls thee ; there's no messenger that comes but brings this promise in his hand, ' Even this shall work for good.' Read it and rejoice.

2. Lay thyself down quietly under it. No more perplexing or distracting cares, what shall become of thee ; no more unwarrantable shifting for thyself : Let God alone. Shift not for thyself, lest God leave thee to thine own shifts. Let not the violence of evil men disturb thy peace, or provoke thee to unpeaceableness. Whatever provocations thou mayest have, avenge not thyself, neither give place unto wrath, murmuring, or fears. In thy patience, possess thy soul, thy God, and his good word ; thy strength is to sit still. Stand still and see the salvation of God ; thou hast nothing to do but to be holy ; let that be thine only care ; thy God will see to it thou shalt be happy ; he is faithful that hath promised. Love God, and leave thyself and thy whole interest in this blessed word, ' all things shall work to thee for good.'

By this time you see something of the riches of this promise ; God is in the promise ; the God of peace, the God of power, the God of patience, the God of hope, the heart of God, the

help of God, the presence of God ; by virtue whereof, all that ever befalls them shall work for their good. Methinks the hearing of this promise opened, should set your souls, and all that is within you a crying out, O that this were my portion ! Wherever my lot do fall, as to outward things, though in a prison, though in a desert, though on a dung-hill ; let the lot of my soul lie in this promise, ‘ the God of peace shall be with you.’ Why, brethren, will you take up with godliness ; you have learned, and received, and heard the word of the Lord ; the word of faith, the word of righteousness, and holiness, will you hearken to, will you obey these words ? These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you.

O what foolish creatures are we, that ever we should be afraid of religion, afraid of holiness, afraid to own, obey, and follow God and his holy ways. What unreasonable fears are these, to those that believe the scriptures ? If the scriptures be true, this is the only way, this following God in holiness, to put yourselves out of all danger, to put yourselves into the heart, arms, presence, and protection, of the almighty God of heaven and earth.

O that I could persuade you in thither, and there leave you ; if you are once in the Lord’s arms, you are safe enough, into whatever hands you fall.

Christians, my business whilst I have been with you, hath been, to bring you to God, to espouse you to Christ ; and you that have already, or will yet at last be persuaded to give your consent, and will give me leave to make up the match, I can give you assurance, that he will shortly come and make up the marriage ; and must say to you, as Naomi to Ruth, Ruth iii. 10. ‘ Sit still my daughter, till you see how the matter will fall for the man will not be in rest, till he hath finished the thing this day.’ Sit still, Christians, till you see how matters will fall ; and however they fall, know, your Lord will not be in rest, till he hath finished this thing, and brought you home, to be with him where he is.

I am now parting from you in this confidence, that however, after a few days I shall see your faces no more in this world, yet I shall shortly meet you in the bride-chamber of glory, where we shall ever be with the Lord.

Beloved in the Lord, I must now leave you, but give me leave ere I go, to deal freely with you, and yet a little further, in the close of my day, this once more to open my heart to you ; and to tell you,

1. What my parting fears.

2. What my parting wishes for you are, which I carry upon my spirit.

1. My parting fears, I go off from you with, are especially these:

1. I am afraid, that there are many of you, upon whom I have bestowed my labour in vain, I am afraid, that I have instructed you in vain, exhorted, persuaded, beseeched, and re-proved you in vain : It was the apostle's case, and his fear, concerning the Galatians, chap. iv. 11.

It is my grief, that when I would have no more to speak, but an healing word, a comforting word ; I must yet drop down a bitter word on some of you ; that when I would speak only from mount Gerizzim, I must yet again speak to some from mount Ebal ; that when I would leave a blessing behind me upon you all, I am like to leave some bound under a curse. It is grievous to me thus to speak, yet for the discharge of my duty, and for your own necessity, bear with me ; I am afraid, that whilst I have been preaching to you, of an incorruptible crown, of an everlasting rest, a kingdom of joy and glory ; I am afraid there are many of you, ' That have no part nor lot in the matter, but are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity ; if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.' And are there none among you, from whom this gospel is hid ? hid as to the light of it, hid as to the saving power and efficacy of it ? I am afraid there's many a blind eye, many an hard heart, many a spirit still in prison, under the power of their lusts and brutish sensuality ; I am afraid there are many such among you ; and are not you afraid so too ? Oh that you were !

2. I have a greater fear than this ; I am afraid of some of you that not only all my past labours, but this last will be lost also. Those that stand it out to their last day, do usually stand it out in their last day. Blessed be God, that there are amongst you those over whom my soul is comforted ; to whom I can speak in the words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 16. ' God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine that hath been delivered unto you ; and being now made free from sin, you are become the servants of righteousness.' Oh that I could thus speak ! Oh that I could thus rejoice over you all ! But as the apostle said to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xii. 20. ' I fear, lest when I come, I shall find you such as I would not.' So must I say with a grieved heart ; I fear, that now I am going, I shall leave you such as I would not. I would not leave one blind person, one vain person, one loose liver, not one unbeliever, or impenitent amongst you all. O what a good day would this day of my departure be ? what light would there be in this dark evening, were it thus with you ? If I might see you all recovered out of the snares of the devil ; every man's eye opened ; every man's fetters off ; every man's prison broken, and his soul escaped from that deadly bondage ; if every poor deadly creature among you, who yet lies bound hand and foot in his grave-

clothes, might now at last stand up from the dead, and live the life of God ; this would be mine and your great rejoicing ; but oh I fear with this apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 21. ‘ My God will humble me,’ and grieve me, and afflict me, to see in what a woful plight I must leave divers of you.

Oh ye sons of the night, you poor, ignorant, and dark souls, upon whom the light hath shined, but your darkness comprehendeth it not : Oh you poor, obstinate and hardened souls, upon whom I have been plowing, as upon rocks, and hewing as upon adamants, who still remain under as great hardness, as if no dew nor rain had ever fallen on you. Oh you poor, half-baked, almost Christians, that have taken up your stand in your present attainments ; my soul is under great fears, and must weep in secret for you, whilst my tongue must be henceforth silent : Oh every soul, that is without fear of himself ; my soul is afraid of you ; the fearless soul is in a fearful state.

Sinners, let my fears be your fears ; What, is there such astonishing guilt upon you, and yet not afraid ? Such a dreadful roll writ against you, and yet not afraid ? So many sabbaths, sermons, warnings lost, and never to be recalled ; nor any assurance left of one sermon, or warning more, and yet not afraid ? Such a subtil devil, such a deceitful heart, such a tempting world, that you have to deal withal ; such a black and bottomless pit, into which you are falling, and yet not afraid : Oh what stocks and stones hath the gospel to deal withal !

Beloved, I have laboured much with you, both publicly, and from house to house, to bring you under a due fear and jealousy of yourselves ; but hitherto your hearts have been too hard for me : Oh yet for trembling hearts, tremble and sin not ; fear and pray, fear and hope, fear and repent : ‘ Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.’ Oh if my fears were once become your fears ; your fears would become my hopes ! Oh what a day-spring of hopes would arise from the shaking of secure hearts ! These fears would be as the thicker darkness, fore-runners of break of day.

2. My parting wishes, and desires for you are,

1. That the good seed which hath been sown amongst you, were well rooted in every heart : I wish that my twenty years ministry among you, may not be lost labour to any one of your souls.

2. I wish that your next seeds-man may be more skilful and successful ; that the good Lord will provide you a man, that may teach you in wisdom, gain you in love, lead you on to life, by an holy example ; and if the Lord grant you this mercy, I wish that such an one may be dearly prized, and cheerfully accepted by you. God keep this flock from a ravening wolf, and a deceitful shepherd.

3. I wish that there may be no root of bitterness springing up amongst you : that there be no divisions or contentions, but that you may live in peace and love, that the God of peace and love may be with you.

4. I wish that this place, where so much good seed hath been sown, may become a fruitful field, that the fruits of faith and repentance, the fruits of righteousness and holiness may be in you and abound ; that you may be neither barren, nor unfruitful, that religion in the power and practice of it, may so visibly flourish, in the several persons, in the several families of this congregation, that they that go by, may see and say, This is the field which the Lord hath blessed.

5. I wish, that wherever clouds may at any time gather over you, may not fall down in a withering storm or a sweeping flood, but may pass away in a mist, or dissolve into a fruitful dew ; that no persecutions or temptations may ever carry you down the stream with evil men, nor blight any hopeful beginnings, that are budding forth in any of your souls, : if tribulation should be any of your lots, I wish it may not be to you as the hail of Egypt, but as the dew of Hermon.

I wish you a joyful harvest, that you may reap in eternity what hath been sown in time ; may you now sow in righteousness, and hereafter reap in mercy : may every one that is now sowing in tears, forever reap in joy ; may you that go on your way weeping, bearing precious seed, return with joy and bring your sheaves with you : may the showers of this day, be the watering of your seed, that it may spring up to eternal life.

Brethren, my heart's desire for you all is, that you may be saved ; and if there be any persons that bear evil will to me, my particular wish for them is, the good will of him that dwelt in the bush be those men's portions for ever.

These are some of my wishes for you : will you join your wishes with mine : will you turn your wishes into prayers, and let this be your prayer ; ' The Lord grant thee thine heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind.'

Brethren, do I wish you any harm in all this ? If not, if it be to be wished that the word of Christ were rooted in your hearts, and your souls thereby rooted in the grace of God ; if it be to be wished, that your lust were rooted out, your sins dead and dried up, your foot gotten out of the snare, your souls brought into the fold, your fruits of righteousness and holiness abounding and growing up to eternal life : If all this be to be wished, then give in your votes with mine ; wish and pray, pray and press on ; press on and wait for the accomplishment of this grace in you all. I tell you again, I wish you well ; and not only I, but the Lord God hath sent me to you : the Lord Jesus wishes you well ; he wishes and woos, woos and weeps, weeps and



dies, that your souls might live, and be blessed for ever : he hath once more sent me to you, even to the worst amongst you, to tell you from him, that he is unwilling you should perish ; that he hath a kindness for you in his heart, if you will accept it : he hath blood and bowels for you : blood to expiate your guilt, to wash away your filth ; and bowels to offer you the benefit of his blood ; with this wish, ‘ Oh that it were theirs ! Oh that they would hearken and accept !’ Only I must add, that the Lord hath two sorts of wishes concerning sinners : the first is, ‘ Oh that they would hearken.’ Oh that they would come in, be healed, and be saved, Deut. v. 29. This wish is an olive-branch that brings good tidings, and gives great hopes of peace and mercy.

His last wish is, ‘ Oh that they had hearkened, that they had accepted,’ Psal. lxxxix. 13. ‘ Oh that my people had hearkened to me !’ Luke-xix. 42. ‘ Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace.’ This wish hath nothing but dread and death in it : it is the black flag hung out, that proclaims eternal wars. The sense is, Israel had once a fair time of it ; a time of love, a time of grace, a time of peace : Oh that they had hearkened then, that they had known the things that concern their peace ! But woe, woe to them, it is now too late, the door is shut, the season is over, the day is past ; ‘ But now they are hid from thine eyes.’

There are three deadly darts in this wish, ( Oh that thou hadst ) it concludes in it these three cutting words, ‘ Thou hast not : Thou mightest : Thou shalt not for ever.’

1. There is this in it, (Thou hast not)—What have I not ? Why, ‘ thou hast not known the things that belong to thy peace.’ Thou hast had the door of glory, the gate of heaven open to thee, and hast been called for, and invited in, but thou hast lost the opportunity. Thou knewest not when thou wert well offered, nor wouldest take notice what a day was before thee, what a price was in thine hand ; thy peace, the gospel of peace, the Prince of peace, a kingdom of peace was set open, offered and brought home to thy doors, but thou hadst so many other matters to look after, that thou tookest no notice of it, but hast let it slip. There is one dart, (Thou hast not known.) There is a gospel gone, there is a Christ gone, there is a soul, a kingdom lost.

2. There is this in it, (Thou mightest). Oh that thou hadst ? Why, might I ? Yes, thou mightest, if thou wouldest, thou mightest. Thy God did not mock thee, when he preached peace to thee ; he was willing, and wished it thine ; if thou wouldest thou mightst have made it thine own : but whilst he would thou wouldest not.

There is another dart (I might have known), I have none to

thank but myself for the loss ; mine undoing was mine own doing. There are no such torments, as when the soul flies upon itself, and takes revenge on itself ; oh the gashes that such self reflections make. Soul, how camest thou in hither into all this misery ? oh it is of myself, myself that my destruction is. The door was open, and I was told of it, and was bid come in, but I would not. That I am lost and undone, was not my fate, which I could not avoid, but my fault and my folly. It seems to give some ease of our torment, when we can shift off the fault. It was not I, but the woman said Adam ; It was not I, but the serpent, said the woman ; if that had been true, it would have given ease, as well as served for an excuse. This thought (it was mine own doing) tears the very caul of the heart. Oh I have none to blame but myself ; mine own foolish and froward heart. This is my ignorance, this is my unbelief, this is my wilfulness, my lust, and my pleasures, and my idols, that I was running after, that have brought me under this dreadful loss. It was my own doing.

3. There is this in it, (Thou shalt not for ever.) Oh that thou hadst ! why, may I not yet ? Is there no hope of recovering the opportunity ? not one word more, not one hour more, may not the sun go one degree backward ? No, no, it is too late, too late ; thou hast had thy day ; from henceforth no more for ever. There is the last dart, (time is past) there is the death, the hell, the anguish, the worm that shall gnaw to eternity.

This one word (time is past) sets all hell a roaring ; and when it is once spoken to a sinner on earth, there is hell begun. Go thy way wretch, fill up thy measure, and fall into thy place. The gospel hath no more to say to thee, but this one word ; ‘ Because I have called, and thou refusedst, I have stretched out my hand, and thou regardest not, but hast set at nought all my counsels, and wouldst none of my reproofs ; I also will laugh at thy calamities, and mock when thy fear cometh ; when thy fear cometh as desolation, and thy destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon thee ; then shalt thou call, but I will not answer, thou shalt seek me early, but shalt not find me.’

Beloved, my hopes are, and I am not able to say, but that you are yet under the first wish ; Oh that they would. Christ is yet preaching to you faith, and sends his wish along with his word, ‘ Oh that they would believe !’ Christ is yet preaching repentance and conversion to you, and wishes, ‘ O that they would repent,’ that they would be converted ; and to this wish of my Lord, my soul, and all that is within me, says Amen.

Brethren, will you yet again say your Lord nay ? shall Christ have his wish ? shall your servant for Jesus sake, shall I have

my wish? will you now at last consent to be sanctified, and to be saved? let me have this wish, and I dare promise you from the Lord, you shall have yours, even whatever your soul can desire.

Brethren, this once hear, this once be prevailed upon; be content that your lusts be rooted out, and your Lord planted into your souls. Be content to be pardoned; content to be converted, content to be saved. This once hear, lest if you now refuse, ye no more be persuaded with, 'Oh that they would!' but be for ever confounded with, 'Oh that they had!' Lest all our wishes, and wooings of you be turned into weepings, and mournings over you; this once hear; Oh that you would.

I heartily thank you, for your good wishes, and good-will towards me; for your willing and chearful entertainment of my person, and attendance on my ministry. And particularly, for your passionate desire of my longer stay among you. Which desire if God had not, my soul could not have denied you. Though the Almighty, to whose pleasure it is meet that we all submit; he hath said nay to that wish of yours; yet let your souls say Amen, to this last of mine, that the Lord God would dwell among you, and in you, both now and for ever.

And having thus finished my labours among you, I shall now close up with this double account.

1. Of my discharge of my ministry in this place.

2. Of my deprival. And shall so commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

1. Of my discharge of my ministry; what my doctrine and manner of life have been, is known to you; and what my aim and intent hath been, is known to God. The searcher of hearts, knows that it is the salvation of souls that hath been the mark at which I have levelled. My way hath been to use all plainness, that I might be made manifest in your consciences: weakneses, and infirmities, both natural and sinful, (the Lord pardon it) I have had many. I am sensible that much more might have been done, both in public and private, had it not been for a weakly body and a slothful heart.

I repent that I have had no more zeal for God, no more compassion to souls; I repent that I have been no more constant and importunate with you, about the matters of eternity. 'Oh eternity, eternity!' that thou wert more in the heart and lips of the preacher, in the hearts and ears of the hearers. But while I thus judge myself for my failings, blessed be God, I have a witness in my conscience, and I hope in yours also, that I have not thinned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Brethren, I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, good and evil, and have not

ceased from day to day, to warn you to choose life, and that good way that leads to it; and to escape for your lives from the way of sin and death. Oh remember the many instructions I have given you, the many arguments whereby I have striven with you, the many prayers that have been offered up, for the guiding and gaining your souls into the path of life, and the turning your feet out of the way of destruction. Oh might I be able to give this testimony concerning you all, at my departure; 'they have troden in the right path; they have chosen the good part that shall not be taken from them.'

Brethren, beloved, with whom I have travailed in birth, that Christ might be formed in you; I must shortly give up my account in a more solemn assembly; will you help me to give it up with joy, by shewing your souls before the Lord, as the seal of my ministry. Every sincere convert among you will be a crown of rejoicing to me in that day. So let me rejoice, and let my joy be the joy of you all.

What shall I say more? If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, any bowels and mercy; if the glory of the Eternal God, the honour of the everlasting gospel, the safety of your immortal souls; the incorruptible crown; the exceeding eternal weight of glory, weigh any thing with you, then once more let me beseech you by all this, to hearken to that word of the gospel, which God hath spoken to you by me.

2. Of my deprival. The most glorious morning hath its evening; the hour is come wherein the sun is setting upon not a few of the prophets; the shadows of the evening are stretched forth upon us; our day draws, our work seems to be at an end. Our pulpits and places must know us no more.

This is the Lord's doing, let all the earth keep silence before him.

It is not a light thing for me, brethren, to be laid aside from the work, and cast out of the vineyard of the Lord; and it must be something of weight that must support under so severe a doom.

I know there are not a few that will add to the affliction of the afflicted, by telling the world it is their own fault, they might prevent it if they would; whether this be so or no, God knoweth, and let the Lord be judge. Blessed be God, whatever be, this is not laid to our charge, as the reason of our seclusion, either insufficiency or scandal.

You are not ignorant what things there are imposed on us, as the condition of our continuing our ministrations; which how lawful and expedient soever they seem in the judgment of many, yet have the most specious arguments that plead for them, left me utterly dissatisfied in my conscience about them.

I must profess before God, angels and men, that my non-

submission is not from any disloyalty to authority, nor from pride, humour, or any factious disposition, or design; but, because I dare not contradict my light, nor do any thing concerning which my heart tells me, the Lord says, do it not.

After all my most impartial enquiries, after all my seeking counsel from the Lord, after all my considering, and consulting with men of all persuasions about these matters, I find myself so far short of satisfaction, that I am plainly put to this choice, to part with my ministry or my conscience. I dare not lie before God and the world; nor come and tell you, I approve, I allow, I heartily consent, to what I neither do, nor can; but must choose rather, that my ministry be sealed up by my sufferings, than lengthened out by a lie: through the grace of God, though men do, yet my heart shall not reproach me while I live; 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.' But however, though I must now no longer act as a minister, I shall, through the grace of God endeavour peaceably, and patiently, to suffer as a Christian.

I should, to testify my obedience to authority, have become all things to all men, to the uttermost that I could, with any clearness of heart: but since matters stand so, I must lose my place, or my peace, I cheerfully suffer myself to be thrust off the stage.

And now welcome the cross of Christ, welcome reproach, welcome poverty, scorn and contempt, or whatever else may befall me on this account. This morning I had a flock, and you had a pastor; and now behold a pastor without a flock, a flock without a shepherd: this morning I had an house, but now I have none: this morning I had a living, but now I have none: 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Beloved, I am sensible of many weaknesses and disadvantages I am under, which may render a suffering state the harder to be borne; help me by your prayers; and not me only, but all my brethren also, with whom my lot must fall; 'Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' Pray,

1. That God would make our silence speak, and preach the same holy doctrine that we have preached with our lips.

2. That he would give supports answerable to our sufferings; that he who comforteth those that are cast down, will also comfort his servants that are cast out.

3. That, according to our earnest expectation, and our hope, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in us, whether it be by life or by death.

And thus, Brethren, I bid you all farewell, in the words of the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 'Finally, Brethren, farewell, be

perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of peace and love shall be with you.'

'And that God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

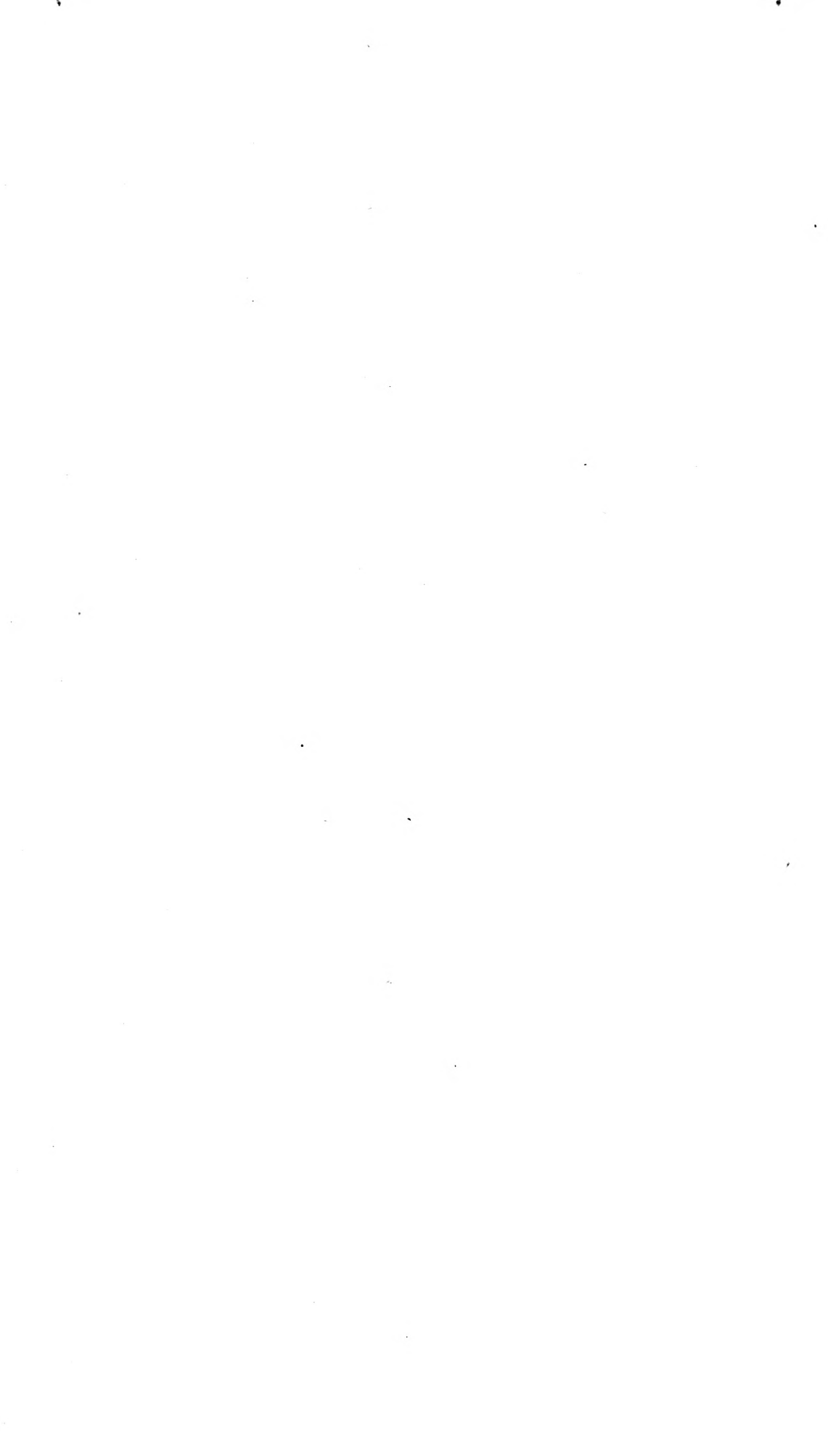
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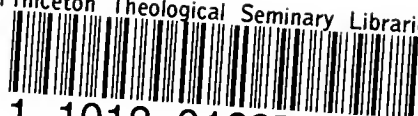
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